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**GERMAN DIPLOMATIC  
DOCUMENTS  
1871-1914  
IN FOUR VOLUMES**





# GERMAN DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS 1871-1914

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY THE RT. HON.

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AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME I

BISMARCK'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND  
1871-1890



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## PREFACE

BY

THE RT. HON. SIR RENNELL RODD, G.C.B., M.P.

THE German Diplomatic Documents translated into English in the first of a series of four volumes are of exceptional interest and particularly so to one who, like myself, was stationed at Berlin for a considerable number of the years which they cover. They deal mainly with Anglo-German relations during the period 1871 to 1890, when the conduct of affairs in the new Empire might justly be described as the personal government of Prince Bismarck. The hand that drafted the majority of the despatches and memoranda may be that of one of his two sons or of his son-in-law Count Rantzau, but the voice is the Chancellor's. Such a collection, containing admittedly only selected pieces, cannot of course be an exhaustive exposition of the international situation even as seen from or interpreted by the Wilhelmstrasse. Much interesting matter would no doubt be reserved for private letters, not to be found in the official archives, and a tendency to prudent understatement is characteristic of the formal despatch. This volume nevertheless presents a tolerably complete picture of the alternating phases of relations between Great Britain and Germany as influenced by their respective obligations and interests in those international issues which grouped or divided the Powers over a period of twenty years.

Such a collection of documents, however authoritative, could, in view of all that is omitted, only be used as a basis for history in conjunction with much supplementary information from other sources. It might, for instance, be assumed from the Memorandum of Prince Bismarck of January 31st, 1882 (page 112), that the steps which led to the entry of Italy into the Triple Alliance were due to Italian initiative. But many antecedents combined to bring about the actual *démarche* referred to. A long period of friction between France and Italy succeeding the French occupation of Tunis, which was secretly encouraged by the

Chancellor at the Berlin Congress in conformity with his policy of diverting French energy to Africa, had predisposed Italy to associate herself with the central empires. If the final overture was due to Italy, she had been shepherded into a position which made it almost inevitable. A passage in that memorandum will be read to-day with exceptional interest in view of subsequent developments. 'What,' the Chancellor asks, 'would be Italy's position if, say, Germany, conscious that with the addition of the Italian army the two Imperial Powers had increased strength behind them, declared war unnecessarily against France for some cause not now foreseen?' The situation, thus hypothetically conceived, actually arose in 1914, and Italy was able entirely to justify the action she took under the terms of the Triple Alliance.

In the first half of the period with which these official documents deal there is little or nothing in the views expressed by the Chancellor to which we should be entitled to take exception. Germany, consolidated into an Empire round the Prussian throne, after the annexation of the Danish Duchies and Alsace-Lorraine, only wanted peace to develop her economic and industrial potentiality. The Chancellor could, while acting in the interest of his own country, also acquire merit by assuming the function of the honest broker endeavouring to adjust by reasonable compromise the quarrels of other nations which might react on Germany. A cordial understanding with Great Britain was valuable for his purpose, but the documents here published show how inconclusive were the conversations which have been regarded as overtures for an alliance in 1879, and it may be doubted whether Count Münster in London was not carried away by optimism in reporting that 'Lord Beaconsfield sets the greatest value on an alliance with Germany'. In any case, in the following year, when the latter was replaced by Mr. Gladstone, conditions had ceased to be propitious for such a project. Ten years afterwards the proposal was renewed to Lord Salisbury in a more definite form by Prince Bismarck, but the political position at home made it impossible for the British Government to do more than reserve the suggestion 'for practical consideration' at a more opportune moment.

In spite of these overtures inspired by the conditions prevailing at the time, future historians will probably find a turning-point in Anglo-German relations in the second decade of this period, when internal considerations compelled the Chancellor to give active support to those who were promoting a colonial expansion for Germany. A friendly attitude towards Great Britain which had been maintained on general grounds was then realized to be a marketable asset, and support or opposition

throughout our difficulties in Egypt, a country which in 1875 and 1877 Prince Bismarck had desired us to occupy, became dependent on the concessions we were prepared to make to German interests. As a result, notwithstanding periodical *rapprochements*, a latent spirit of national rivalry established itself which was to mature into chronic suspicion and mistrust. The change began with the communication in November, 1883, of a German proposal to found a trading station in Africa at Angra Pequena, which our Government certainly did not handle with discretion. Several chapters of the present volume are devoted to negotiations respecting Zanzibar and Samoa, but the documents here published furnish only a restricted purview of issues which produced far graver tension than might be realized from their contents. One seeks in vain for any pieces throwing light on a very disagreeable incident arising out of the publication of a German White Book on Colonial questions in 1885, which opened with a despatch to Count Münster, dated May 5th, 1884, the contents of which he was invited to communicate to Lord Granville. It was couched in the most friendly terms and expressed the desire only to go hand in hand with us in such matters. Had it been submitted to the British Government, many subsequent occasions of irritation might have been eliminated. But the Ambassador was instructed simultaneously by telegraph not to make the communication. The publication of this despatch as the text of a sermon on the shortcomings of Great Britain which the rest of the White Book was designed to preach, with no better response to our mild protest than that its non-communication must have escaped the Chancellor's memory, was really an affront to a Government which could be counted on not to retaliate. The spirit of mutual confidence in Anglo-German relations that subsisted for many years after the foundation of the German Empire was never wholly re-established.

The strongest impression which these documents will make upon readers will probably be their revelation of how greatly the mentality of the western world has changed since they were drafted, and most especially during the decade which has succeeded the Great War. The shaping of policy, as exhibited in these despatches and memoranda, is really governed almost exclusively by the ultimate idea of war as the deciding factor. Principles are of quite secondary importance. In considering whether a policy should be followed or an alliance contemplated, the military strength of international combinations is always carefully weighed in the balance against the strength of another nation or group of nations. The menace of war and the prospects of success or failure in aggression or defence appear to be the essential motives of policy. If the spirit revealed in these pages,

which continued until so recently to govern the direction of international relations, can be effectually placed under the ban of outlawry in the comity of civilized nations, a great step will no doubt have been gained in the social evolution of mankind.

*September, 1928*

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## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

**S**HORTLY after the conclusion of the war the Republican Government of Germany determined on the publication of a series of documents from the archives of the Foreign Office. The object was, as explained in the introduction to the first volume, to meet the justified claim that the German people should be fully informed as to the conduct of their affairs by the former Government of Germany. In order to insure full impartiality in the selection of the documents, the editing of the work was entrusted to three well-known historians:—Doctors Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme. While the original intention had been to limit this publication to the years immediately preceding the war, further consideration showed that it was desirable to include the whole period since the foundation of the Empire in 1871. The work, which assumed unexpected dimensions, and was successfully completed in 1927, extends to over fifty volumes. As a result we have a very instructive picture of the foreign policy of Germany during the forty-three years which intervened between the end of the war with France and the outbreak of the war in 1914.

Though originally compiled for the information of the German people themselves, the volumes are of great interest and importance to other countries, and not least to the English nation, for they add appreciably to our knowledge of British policy during the period which they cover. Their publication has therefore been cordially welcomed here. On one point all are agreed; in these great matters of international relations we desire the fullest and most authentic information. We have no reason to shrink from the publication of the real truth and this is the only method of counteracting the unauthenticated rumours, the partial and interested 'disclosures and revelations' which in the absence of fuller knowledge, too often pass as history.

For these and other reasons it is clearly most desirable that the contents of these volumes should be made accessible to English and American readers. The great bulk of the work makes it impossible to expect that a complete translation into English should be published, though we may note that a translation into French has been undertaken. All that can be expected is a

selection of those documents which specially concern this country. Historical students will be grateful to Messrs. Methuen and Captain Dugdale that they have had the enterprise to undertake the preparation and publication of such a selection. In doing so they have wisely confined themselves to a faithful reproduction from the original work. They have printed not only the documents, but the German notes, without comment and without criticism. The object is not propaganda, not defence of the British Government, but to provide students of our foreign policy with material which it is essential that they should be acquainted.

The whole work will be in four volumes. The first, which is now presented to the public, deals with the years 1871-1889, during which Bismarck, as Chancellor, guided the foreign policy of the Empire. Not only does it throw much new light on the foreign policy of this country during a period of great interest, but it contains many characteristic appreciations of the general political conditions here and of the qualities of the leading statesmen, for the documents are not confined to the official despatches of the Ambassadors, Prince Münster and Count Hatzfeldt. None will be read with more interest than the records of conversation with English statesmen. In order to gain a clearer insight into conditions here, Prince Bismarck repeatedly sent over his sons Count Herbert and Count William Bismarck. They were assured of a cordial reception and moved freely in English society, and we have from them reports of conversations, not only with the Foreign Minister, but also with other influential persons. Especially noteworthy are the long discussions with Sir Charles Dilke and others on the Egyptian question, and at a later period, those with Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, who, though at this time, 1889, they were not members of the Government, were, as he reports, very influential. During a short period when Lord Randolph Churchill was leader of the House of Commons in Lord Salisbury's administration, he took a very active interest in foreign affairs. The conversations on both sides seem to have been singularly open and frank; Count Herbert Bismarck was given much insight into the internal difficulties of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. We are now able to compare his account of the visit with that which we have already had in the lives of Lord Granville and Sir Charles Dilke. The latter noted in his diary: 'Herbert Bismarck came over again; if on his former visit he had only tried to get us to dismiss Lord Derby, on this occasion he wanted us to dismiss Lord Granville and Lord Derby.' And again: 'Herbert Bismarck had suddenly arrived; he had come over to try to force us to dismiss Lord Granville and Lord Derby; he puts us in a difficult position as individuals, for how can we say

to this personally friendly fellow that we do not think that Lord Granville's speech in the Lords on Friday foolish, or how say that the allusion to old Bismarck's dislike of Münster in a recent despatch from Malet ought to have been published.'

The subjects dealt with in this volume—the Eastern question, the British occupation of Egypt, and the Colonial differences with Germany—were the subject of numerous blue books issued at the time; they of course, while recording the essential facts, left much as to the ultimate motives of policy unrevealed. For this we have to turn to the biographies of the leading statesmen, and especially the *Life of Disraeli*, the second volume of the *Life of Lord Salisbury*, the *Life of Lord Granville* and that of Sir Charles Dilke. For the period after the fall of the Liberal Government in 1885, we are still without any authoritative guide, but this want will doubtless be met with the publication of the new volumes of Lord Salisbury's life. By comparing these English sources with the documents now available, it will at last be possible to draw a true picture of the relations between England and Germany during these eventful years. To do this must be left to historians. All that is proposed here is to indicate the most important matters at issue and to draw attention to the outstanding points contained in the correspondence.

It is not too much to say that the information throws a completely new light upon the political relations of England and Germany during this period, and in particular on the attitude of Prince Bismarck to England. It had come to be considered by many in Germany that the basis of Bismarckian policy was the maintenance of good relations with Russia and that, as compared with this, the relations to Great Britain were of comparatively secondary importance. More than this, it was represented that his general attitude towards this country in political matters was one of almost contemptuous indifference. For this he was himself responsible. Bismarck was a very free and often indiscreet conversationalist. In moments of hostility to the British Government he was apt to give very free expression to his annoyance, and much which he said, eventually, both during his lifetime and after his death, found its way into print. Moreover, from time to time, chiefly for reasons of internal policy, he found it necessary to encourage violent attacks on English policy and the English Government in the Press. There can in fact be no doubt that by this he became largely responsible for the anti-English feeling which had always existed among certain parties in Germany, a feeling which from time to time led to very regrettable explosions in the Press and which did much permanently to injure the mutual relations of the two countries. But as we can now see, this was only one side of the story. In

the serious and carefully considered documents printed in this volume, we find something very different, a constant endeavour to establish a friendly co-operation with the British Government, and even definite suggestions for an alliance between the two countries. There is no sign here that he under-estimated the importance which a good understanding with England might have for his country; what we do find is the constant expression of annoyance, disappointment and chagrin that he could not persuade the leaders of British policy to take that active and responsible part in the counsels of the European states which he desired.

It is instructive to note that the years immediately succeeding the Franco-Prussian War and the establishment of the German Empire, are passed over almost without notice. There has never been a time when this country kept so much aloof from continental affairs. The ten years succeeding the death of Lord Palmerston were a time, so far as England was concerned, not only of peace, but of complete absence of diplomatic interest. Even during the war itself and the settlement of the terms of peace, except for the insistence on the guarantee of Belgian neutrality, England refused in any way to desert the rôle of absolute neutrality. After the war was over there seemed nothing on the continent of Europe in which she was concerned. The first suggestion of intervention came at the time of the war scare of 1875, which is the subject of the first chapter in this book. Serious alarm had been aroused by the suggestion that Germany proposed, taking as an excuse the reorganization of the French army, to make a sudden and unprovoked attack on France, with the object once and for all of removing the danger that France might in the future attain such a position that she would be able to go to war in order to recover the lost provinces. It is a diplomatic episode to which perhaps more importance has been attached than really belongs to it. It has still not been completely cleared up. There is no doubt that the British Government, not only Lord Derby, but also the Queen (p. 14), had received information by which they were genuinely convinced that there was a real danger of war. Prince Bismarck, who showed himself much annoyed at what he states were unjust suspicions, asked the question what were the sources of information on which this belief was based? 'It would have been highly interesting if Her Majesty had given a more precise account of the origin of these rumours' (p. 15). He suggests that the Emperor might address the direct question to her. This appears never to have been done. While we may certainly place the fullest confidence in the indignant memoranda in which the German Emperor repudiates an intention of an unprovoked and unjust war, the evidence

is indisputable that there had been unwise talk by some of the military in Berlin, and undoubtedly there was a period in 1874 when Prince Bismarck, even though he might himself have had no real intention of going to war, deliberately took steps to make the French Government believe in the possibility of such a danger. It seems to have been a policy, which became more frequent in later years, of using threats of war as a means of preserving peace—a policy which, as later events were to show, may easily fail, and produce the very danger it is intended to avoid.

The real cause of Bismarck's anger is clearly indicated; he found himself in the position that identical advice, accompanied by the suggestion of a warning, was given to him at the same time from St. Petersburg and London, and he received information that the Austrian Government had been asked to associate itself with these steps. He was at once on the alert, for unless the danger was instantaneously stopped, it seemed to indicate the possibility of a general coalition of all the other Powers directed against Germany in support of France. Nothing could have been more unwelcome and we need not be surprised if he used all his energies and resources to dissipate the suspicions on which this movement was based, and also that he never forgave Lord Derby, to whom he attributed a large part of the responsibility.

This was a passing interlude. The real story begins in the next year with the outbreak of troubles in the Balkans. This was a question in which Great Britain was concerned. It was indeed a matter of indifference to her what should be the frontiers of the new states which were gradually being evolved out of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire; she had no direct interest in the respective claims of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria or Roumania, but indirectly these events might be of great importance to her, for they involved the whole question of the future of the Turkish Empire, and with that the control of the road to India, which had from the days of Pitt been one of the chief motives of British policy. A rising in the Balkans would not improbably bring about the intervention of Austria and of Russia; it must inevitably revive the slumbering claims of Russia for, not only the opening of the Straits, but eventually the control of Constantinople. But if the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were open to the passage of Russian ships of war, the naval position of the Mediterranean, which was so essential to our security, would be gravely altered. And moreover, respect for Mohamedan opinion in India indicated that we should continue our traditional policy of the protection of Turkey to which we had bound ourselves by a guarantee treaty in 1856. There was also present the continued difficulties with Russia in Central Asia, and at this time suspicion of and hostility to Russia was the one abiding influence both

in the Government and in the nation. It was, therefore, inevitable that as soon as the Balkan question was opened, this country must come out of its seclusion and take its part in the counsels of the other European Powers. If there were to be a Russian advance on Constantinople, it was natural that this should be opposed by Austria, whose direct interests would be endangered. Everything suggested wise co-operation with that Empire, but it was essential to know what in such a contingency would be the action of Germany—the strongest and most efficient state upon the continent of Europe.]

We get therefore the scene set. The potential rivals, Russia and Austria; Germany the traditional ally of Russia, who at that time was still estranged from Austria by the recollection of Königgratz. Though Germany and Prince Bismarck always professed, and at that time truly, that they had no immediate interests in Balkan affairs, the real decision rested in Berlin, and above all on the determination of the Chancellor. His chief object was to preserve the peace between Austria and Russia. This had hitherto been done by the existence of the Dreikaiserbund, an informal understanding between the three Emperors. So long as this continued, the peace of Europe and the security of Germany were safe. The military power of these three Monarchs was so great that against them in conjunction, all other states of Europe were helpless. But this halcyon condition of affairs was broken down by the increasing opposition between Russia and Austria, and by the impossibility of reconciling Austrian, Russian and British interests in the East.

And we now have the full story told from the German point of view of the manner in which Bismarck worked during the critical years 1876-1878 to prevent the outbreak of war between Austria and Russia, and also the manner in which, by offering to come forward as mediator between England and Russia in the spring of 1878, he helped to remove the difficulties which for a time threatened to prevent the meeting of the European Congress at Berlin.

The year 1878 was to be a turning point in European history. The events preceding and following the Congress of Berlin seemed in Bismarck's opinion to show a dangerous tendency in Russia which would make impossible the continuance of his policy of maintaining a genuine neutrality between the two rival and contiguous Empires. Russia seemed inclined to resort to threats in order to compel Germany to take her side on the numerous matters at issue between Russia and Austria. He was therefore as it seemed to him, though against his will, forced into the position of reconsidering his whole policy. There resulted the celebrated alliance with Austria which afterwards, by the adhesion

of Italy, became the Triple Alliance, which was the basis of the whole European status down to 1914.] We are not called on here to consider the justice of the motives by which he was influenced; they have been recently openly challenged by Prince Lichnowsky; it is sufficient to point out that this change in the situation greatly modified his attitude towards this country. The friendship of England, which he had never under-estimated, became to him of great importance.

Bismarck's motives for desiring an active participation by his country in European affairs are very clearly indicated and often stated with great frankness. Europe to him meant the Great Powers, England, France, Germany, Russia, Austria and Italy. The whole art of European diplomacy at the time consisted in the management of their relations to one another. It was from them and from them alone that danger to peace could come and at this time, as he constantly asserts,—and there is no ground for doubting his statement,—Bismarck was above all anxious for the preservation of peace. There was nothing which Germany wanted which she could gain by war, and a war, even a victorious war, would be disastrous. But at the moment it appeared as if the danger of war arose from two Powers alone, from France and from Russia. France, whatever efforts might be made to ameliorate the situation, was definitely separated from Germany by the annexed provinces. In Russia there was always a danger that the vague ambitions of the pan-Slavonic party might bring about a war with Austria arising out of conflict of interests in the Balkans. Confronted by this danger, Bismarck forced against his will to choose one of the two Monarchical States, had entered into a defensive alliance with Austria of such a nature that Germany would be implicated in a Russo-Austrian war. What he desired was to strengthen this coalition in such a way that neither France nor Russia would dare to hazard the risks of a war. What was more likely to secure this than some definite understanding with England? After all, as he saw, Russia and France were the only two continental powers with which Great Britain had any serious differences. This alone seemed to be sufficient to bring about an understanding with Germany and if, as he constantly explained, it was known in France that an attack on England would at once bring about war with Germany, that an attack on Germany would bring about war with England, then peace would be secured. This is the burden of nearly all that he writes; it is reiterated in his instructions to German representatives abroad, and it was this that led to the first suggestions for an alliance between the two countries.

We are now enabled to read (p. 146) Count Münster's own



account of his remarkable conversation with Lord Beaconsfield in 1879 when the possibility of an alliance between England and Germany was discussed. Lord Beaconsfield's version of what took place has already been published in his Biography; the curious reader is now in a position to compare the two and, if he will, attempt to reconcile the differences. According to Lord Beaconsfield it was the German Ambassador who spoke of an alliance; according to Count Münster it was the English Minister who first used the word. It is curious to note that we have a precisely similar discrepancy in the different accounts of similar conversations which took place more than twenty years later between Lord Lansdowne and Baron Eckardstein.

These overtures ceased when in 1880 a Liberal administration came into office, for Bismarck had not the same confidence in Lord Granville that he had in Lord Salisbury, and then as always he looked with the greatest suspicion and dislike on the political influence of Mr. Gladstone. At the same time a new motive of policy is introduced which greatly enhanced the importance of German goodwill to England.

In 1878 there fell the first beginnings of those events which in 1883 led to the military occupation of Egypt by England, and it may be said that from this time to the settlement with France in 1904, the whole of British foreign policy was influenced and embarrassed by the Egyptian question. The reasons of this are well known. While the first intervention was in co-operation with France and resulted in the establishment of co-dominion, the policy of the two countries, which had in fact never been really identical, rapidly separated and eventually England found herself alone in Egypt, not only without the co-operation, but confronted by the determined hostility of France. This hostility naturally enough showed itself in every part of the world. What was even more important was that owing to the network of agreements, chiefly of a financial character, by which the government of Egypt was controlled, it was possible for the French greatly to impede, and perhaps to stultify altogether the reform of the administration which was the immediate object of British endeavour. In this policy the French could rely in general on the support of Russia. It was therefore of great importance to secure the support of Germany, which, as could be foreseen, would bring that of Austria and also that of Italy. Prince Bismarck found himself in the position that by granting or refusing his support, he could facilitate or frustrate the successful prosecution of English policy.

At first his action was friendly and helpful. He welcomed the appearance of the English in Egypt. German interests there were small, such as they were were purely commercial in char-

actér, and would be furthered by any improvement in the Egyptian government and Egyptian finance. Moreover, he took a wider view. As early as 1876, when the dissolution of the Turkish Empire seemed to be impending, he suggested that England, without going to war with Russia, might well take action by entering into possession of Egypt, and in connection with the very remarkable conversation with Nubar Pacha (p. 51) Bismarck speaks of a British protectorate over Egypt as very sensible. It would be much wiser for England, instead of going to war with Russia for the protection of Turkey, herself to take Egypt as a pledge. She might, he added, take Constantinople as well, but he always maintained that he would be glad to see Egypt under British protection. There was an obvious arrangement by which war about Turkey might be avoided: Austria would occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia part of the Asiatic possessions, England Egypt. France would get her compensation in those districts of Syria with which she had so long an historical connexion. He did not believe in or desire what the French wished, an international control over Egypt, and he hoped that arrangements might be made without war between England and France. He was quite satisfied that the comparatively small interests of Germany in Egypt itself and in the Suez Canal should be protected by the English, and so during the first stages of British occupation the German representatives in Egypt received instructions to work with the English. We find in 1883 and 1884 Lord Granville talking over the Egyptian difficulties with singular frankness to Count Herbert Bismarck, who gave assurances that he might depend on German support whatever the English policy was, even in the case of annexation, which indeed he did not advise (Chapter XI). — XI

And then in the summer of 1884 a sudden and remarkable change took place. It was in that year that Bismarck, who had long refused to support the agitation in Germany for colonial possessions, altered his attitude. There is no reason to believe that he had really given up his fundamental convictions that colonies were of no great importance to Germany and that certainly they were not worth sacrificing the friendship of England. He had against his will been forced into a position which was singularly disagreeable to him. It was one of his cardinal principles that the foreign policy of a country must be reserved for its rulers; this was the great advantage in his view of monarchical government, and he often made a comparison between this and the very unfortunate position in which Ministers of parliamentary states, such as England and France, were placed in that they had to frame their policy in accordance with popular demands. Now he found himself in exactly this position. He

was compelled to frame his policy in accordance with the state of parties in the Reichstag, and again and again in justifying his action, he refers to his anxiety regarding the home situation (p. 224).

Throughout all the negotiations with England regarding the colonial question, he had to think not only of the real merits of the case, but to consider the impression which would be made in Germany and his own position in the Reichstag (p. 176). This necessity undoubtedly forced him into acts, and compelled him to adopt a tone, of imperious impatience which is in marked contrast to his caution, his patience and his subtlety in dealing with those European questions in which he was more completely a master. He therefore, at the end of 1883 and the beginning of 1884, began the series of manœuvres which ultimately ended in the acquisition of the first German colonies on the West Coast of Africa and in the South Seas. The whole story has been told especially in the *Life of Lord Granville*. The British Government had not been prepared for and were slow in realizing the change which had taken place in Bismarck's policy. They treated his despatches and requests not as matters of great urgency; delay was caused by the necessity of consulting the Governments of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Bismarck took this amiss and in order to insure that he should receive the consideration which he maintained was his due, in view of the general relations between the two countries, he suddenly resorted to the method of threats. If the British Government wished to continue receiving his support in Egypt they must fully meet his wishes with regard to New Guinea, Angra Pequena and Zanzibar. The despatches printed here are singularly frank:

'Everything to do with Egypt is only of secondary interest to us, but the colonial question is a matter of life and death for reasons of domestic policy. . . . Public opinion in Germany lays so great a stress on our colonial policy that the Government's position in this country actually depends on its success. I beg you therefore not to forget that Egypt itself is quite indifferent to us and is merely a means of overcoming England's objections to our colonial aspirations. The smallest corner of New Guinea or West Africa, even if quite worthless in itself, is just now of greater import to our policy than the whole of Egypt and its future' (p. 189).

He was not satisfied with this, but at once began conversations with the avowed object of improving the relations between Germany and France, and for this purpose encouraging the French in the obstacles which they were placing to England in Egypt, while he made proposals for co-operation with them in other parts of Africa, and we have the report of conversations

indicating the desire for a close entente with France. In his more confidential instructions he used very strong language; if England would not meet his wishes, she must look forward to a complete break, not indeed a war, for the matters at issue were not worth it, but a diplomatic break.

But in his hostility to Mr. Gladstone's Government, he was also influenced by a more serious apprehension. He scented the danger of a *rapprochement* between England under a Liberal Government, and Russia, which was at that time much influenced by the pan-Slavonic movement, a movement which he regarded as fundamentally revolutionary. As he writes in official instructions on German policy:

'Panslavism with its revolutionary aims is a danger to both the Germanic Powers, to Austria even more than to us, and in the greatest measure of all, to the Empire and Dynasty of Russia. The Slav world in revolution, whether or not it is led by the Russian Emperor, will always be allied with the republican elements, not only in France, but in Italy, Spain and perhaps even in England. There the beginnings of it are evident, as shown by the Gladstonian doctrines' (p. 154);

and in a letter addressed direct to the Emperor William I he speaks of the danger 'of an Anglo-Russian alliance which was entertained by the pan-Slavist party, whose policy includes war with Austria, and later on with Germany'.

'This alliance also forms part of Gladstone's programme, as declared in the House of Commons. Should it be realized, with its pretended Christian and anti-Turkish, but really pan-Slavist and Radical tendencies, the possibility would be open that this alliance at any time, if necessary, could be strengthened by the addition of France, supposing the Anglo-Russian policy met with resistance in Germany. It would form a basis for a coalition against us, than which nothing could be more of a menace to Germany' (p. 205).

For this and other reasons he no doubt desired to show that if she would not meet his wishes, England might in some hour of crisis find herself confronted by a general coalition of Europe. In 1885 there seems to have been a real danger of such a contingency.

It was just at this time that, owing to the Penjdeh incident, for a short time war between Russia and England appeared to be imminent. The German documents show that this might have produced a very serious situation for the British Government. There were many rumours (there is no evidence that they were more than rumours) that it was the intention of the British Government in the case of war, to send a fleet through the Straits into the Black Sea, although this would have been a violation of the treaties made in 1856. Immediately conversations took place between the European Powers. It seems that

in this matter Prince Bismarck took a leading part. The proposal was that the three Empires should join together to urge Turkey to stand by her treaty obligation of keeping the Dardanelles closed. But this was not all. Apparently an invitation had been addressed to the French Government from Berlin to join in any such action. The actual text of this invitation is not included in the German volumes. It is, however, clear that if war had broken out, if this country had acted in accordance with the intentions which were attributed to her, she would have found herself confronted certainly by the three Eastern Empires, and possibly also by a League of Neutrals which would have included France. We do not know whether these discussions had been brought to the knowledge of the Foreign Office; if so, they might well have weighed with Mr. Gladstone's Government when they determined, after long and careful consideration, to settle differences with Russia in a peaceful manner.

The marked ill-temper which Bismarck showed throughout the whole of the colonial affairs, was probably largely to be attributed to the fact that he was being driven into a policy which was very distasteful to him. The domain of what a later generation was to call *Weltpolitik* was unfamiliar to him. He found himself confronted by strange factors, the importance of which he was not able fully to gauge. The British attitude with regard to South Africa and New Guinea was avowedly guided by public feeling in the Cape Colony and in Australia. The forms of the British constitution had not at that time been developed so as to give an opportunity for frank expression to the realities of the new situation. If there were difficulties about the annexation by Germany in South West Africa and in New Guinea, they did not arise from any opposition in Whitehall, but Whitehall could not neglect Cape Town and Melbourne. To Bismarck the British colonies were negligible; they were not even pawns in the game; for him they did not exist.

In a despatch to Count Münster (p. 176) Bismarck expresses his indignation that the Monroe doctrine, 'that monstrosity in international law', was being applied in favour of England to the coast of Africa. 'Supposing it to be really our intention to establish colonies, how can Lord Granville contest our right to do so at the very moment when the British Government is granting an unlimited exercise of the same right to the Government at the Cape?' The challenge involved in these sentences was natural and from his point of view just. But when he complains that the British Government were setting to work to 'hem in our acquisitions at Angra Pequena' (pp. 188-9) and 'to disinter ancient and obsolete rights over Sta. Lucia Bay, which England never at any time had need of', and that 'England's colonial

possessions are so great that her interests cannot surely be injured by any German trading establishments', we can scarcely believe, that he was so ingenuous as these observations might suggest. He could not but have understood that unimportant as each particular piece of territory by itself might appear to be, great interests in reality were at stake.

For how different is it if we look at these matters from the point of view of South Africa itself? There it might well appear to be a dictate of policy that the country south of the Zambesi should not be opened to the colonization of other European states, for inevitably if that were done, it might happen that quarrels which originated in Europe would be fought out on the soil of South Africa just as North America a century before had been the scene of rivalry between England and France. At a time when the Transvaal was still an independent state, when Bechuanaland was unoccupied, there was a serious danger that a German settlement at Angra Pequena and Sta. Lucia Bay would result in the creation of a barrier across the continent by which the expansion of the Cape would be limited. The danger was averted by Sir Charles Warren's expedition to Bechuanaland and the peremptory refusal to permit the annexation by Germany of Sta. Lucia Bay, the one occasion on which the British Government gave a definite and unmistakable No to German demands. But if Bismarck did not understand or would not recognize what great problems of the future might be involved in the possession of what seemed to him worthless deserts, we must acknowledge that many British statesmen were equally blind to the future. The new interest in the Empire which was awakened by Sir Charles Dilke and Professor Seeley, and in a more practical manner by Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Chamberlain, had scarcely begun to do its work, and men of Lord Granville's generation, to whichever party they belonged, were still influenced by the indifference to colonial expansion so characteristic of the middle years of the nineteenth century. Only occasionally do we get a glimpse of the future as when Sir Charles Dilke says to Count Herbert Bismarck, 'I think that annexation by Germany (of new Guinea) is a mistake and that you will in time have a great deal of trouble there. Australia is expanding its own strength and population. In a generation or two, when perhaps she may have broken away from us, she will feel strong enough to wage war like the old European Powers, and will clear out all foreigners from her neighbourhood.' For this reason nothing could have been wiser than the suggestions made by Mr. Chamberlain in 1888, that Germany should cede South West Africa in exchange for Heligoland. But Mr. Chamberlain was one of the first men in high position to foresee the great developments of the British

Dominions. We may note that these colonial difficulties, which at one time assumed so serious a form, eventually were brought to a conclusion on the whole satisfactory to both parties. A large measure of agreement was attained by Count Herbert Bismarck in 1887 (p. 243) and after Bismarck's fall, a final agreement was reached with his successor, Count Caprivi.

It is clear that the bitterness of feeling aroused about these colonial controversies was quite unnecessary; it need never have arisen at all. As soon as the situation was explained in London there was a marked readiness to meet Bismarck's wishes. Mr. Gladstone (p. 192) assured Count Herbert Bismarck that 'even if we had no colonial aspirations I should beseech you to go forward in this direction. . . . I promise you that we shall meet you in an entirely friendly spirit provided that you do not mix other political questions with the colonial question.' Similar language was used by all other British statesmen, for instance Lord Granville, Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain. Of course, even allowing for the general spirit of goodwill, it was inevitable that there should be sharp discussions with regard to each particular territory, but if the affair had been better managed, if there had been more frankness and openness from the beginning, they could throughout have been carried on in a much more friendly atmosphere.

The period of acute friction did not last long. <sup>1885</sup> The fall of M. Ferry's Cabinet which took place in March, 1885, put an end to the short-lived attempts for a *rapprochement* between Germany and France; shortly after that we find Bismarck writing that he had received the impression that 'we ought not to overestimate the determined attitude of the French Government against England', and he draws the conclusion that 'we cannot afford to embroil ourselves with England more than is necessary'. He determined, therefore, to assume the attitude of cautious reserve. This change was facilitated by the change of Government in England, which followed in June. Once more Lord Salisbury was back at the Foreign Office; he at once sent a friendly message to Bismarck (p. 208), and Bismarck quickly resorted to his policy of friendship with England; this was not seriously interfered with by the short Liberal administration during the spring of 1886 when Lord Rosebery was Foreign Secretary. Bismarck's action in this and other matters was largely influenced by his personal predilections; his quarrel had been not so much with this country as a whole as with the Liberal administration of Mr. Gladstone. This again was largely connected with the internal situation in Germany. Bismarck had recently carried out the great change from free trade to protection; in doing so he was confronted by a large mass

of Liberal opinion in Germany, which was inspired by the ideals and principles associated with the name of Cobden. He professed to regard the advocacy of free trade as an illustration of the undue influence which English thought had upon German opinion; in order to combat this, he had used one of the ablest of his assistants, Lothar Bucher, to start an anti-British campaign in the German Press, and of course this opposition was intensified so long as the Government of this country was in the hands of confirmed adherents of free trade. ^

With Lord Salisbury he had much greater intellectual sympathy, and we have here more than one interesting episode in which Lord Salisbury is represented, in language which might almost have been used by Bismarck himself, as regretting the new conditions which made it difficult to pursue an active policy, contrasting Pitt's time, when the aristocracy governed, and the present day when 'democracy is on the top and with it the personal and party system' (p. 374). It was natural enough then from the time when the Conservative Government returned with every prospect of a long continuance in office, that close co-operation between England and Germany should be resumed. In 1887 this took a very remarkable form, for it was in that year that Lord Salisbury entered into two agreements with Italy and with Austria; by the first of these it was agreed that the three Powers should act together for the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea; Italy declared that she was ready, and Great Britain that she was disposed, as against encroachments by a third Power (which of course meant France), to support the action of Italy at every other point whatsoever on the North African coast districts, and especially in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. By the second the same principles, the maintenance of peace, the exclusion of aggression and the maintenance of the *status quo*, were applied to Turkey; in effect this was an agreement to defend the independence of Turkey as the guardian of important European interests (the independence of the Caliphate, the freedom of the Straits, etc.) against all foreign preponderating influences. These agreements were very carefully worded; they expressed community of interests and identity of intention, but anything in the nature of a binding treaty agreement was carefully avoided. None the less, they are a very important step towards a definite and formal co-operation with the Triple Alliance as against France and Russia. No important political action of this country in recent times has been carried out with such secrecy. Of course some rumours of what was being done got about and there were awkward questions in Parliament, but they were successfully evaded and the text, in fact the very existence of



these documents, was unknown until they were published by an Austrian historian in 1920.<sup>1</sup> In this volume we can for the first time read the whole record of the negotiations leading up to these agreements. We may note that, as will be shown in a subsequent volume, they lapsed when Lord Rosebery came into office in 1892, and they were not renewed when Lord Salisbury returned to power in 1894, so that they disappeared as silently as they had come into being.

The conclusion of these agreements was shortly followed by further steps. We have first a very remarkable personal letter addressed by Bismarck to Lord Salisbury in which, in language of great gravity, he explains the fundamental principles which, whoever might be guiding the policy of the country, would certainly be maintained. With a special reference to Prince William of Prussia, who was destined soon to succeed to the throne of his grandfather, he explained that never would Germany systematically adopt a policy hostile to England. Anything of this kind would be impossible in Germany and the opposite (hostile policy of England towards Germany) was equally out of the question. Quickly following on this we have the formal offer of an alliance to be made officially by the German Ambassador. To this no definite answer was or could be given. And so the matter remained. A few months were to pass and Bismarck was out of office; the proposals for an alliance were not to be renewed for nearly ten years.

During the whole of this period it was of the highest advantage for Germany that the direction of her policy remained in the hands of one man, and that in this domain he ruled, not only without a rival, but almost without opposition. It was only very occasionally that the Emperor, as just before the conclusion of the alliance with Austria, for a time refused his consent to Bismarck's proposals. For twenty years before he had been closely concerned with foreign affairs, and he had accumulated an intimate knowledge of the recent history of Europe, the personalities of the different courts, the qualities and ambitions of the nations, which alone was sufficient to put him in a different category from any statesman in another nation. In home affairs he always was to the end ill at ease; in foreign affairs an unrivalled master. How different was it in other countries, and especially in France and in England; not only were there frequent changes of Ministry, but the Foreign Secretaries too often came to this responsible work without previous experience and the insight which experience alone can give. Of all those in this country with whom Bismarck had to deal, it was Lord Salisbury alone (perhaps we may add Lord

<sup>1</sup> Fribram, *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary*, Vol. I.

Rosebery) with whom he felt any close intellectual sympathy. Nothing is so remarkable as the manner in which the change of ministry here at once affects the relations with Germany, and yet it may be suggested that it was the personality of the statesmen rather than the policy of the party by which Bismarck was influenced. He and his advisers have little good to say of Lord Derby, and indeed though he was a man of very high intellectual ability, he was one singularly reluctant to commit himself to a determined course of action, and there are times, especially in foreign affairs, when irresolution is the greatest vice. When the Foreign Office was transferred to Lord Salisbury in 1878, the scene at once changes. But Lord Salisbury went out of office in 1880 and for five years there was a Liberal administration. It is not accidental that these years comprised a period of complete friction, arising chiefly from colonial matters. Lord Granville himself, a man of singular charm, was not free from the defects of Lord Derby; always conciliatory and desirous of avoiding offence, he was slow to give a direct answer to the categorical questions and demands addressed to him from Berlin and he had not that power of concentrated industry which even then the Foreign Office required. Moreover, he was not completely master in his own house; he had a Cabinet to consult, a Cabinet which, as we know, was often divided within itself.

Nothing in this volume is more remarkable than the freedom with which English statesmen of all parties discussed with the German representatives their domestic differences. Nothing of the kind would have been possible in Berlin. It may occasionally have added something to the difficulties of the Foreign Secretary, but it is doubtful whether the interests of the country as a whole suffered. The German criticisms are not always convincing. Nothing, for instance, could be more misleading than the statement that Mr. Gladstone was indifferent to and careless of the honour and greatness of his country. This is merely an unintelligent repetition of the talk in a certain section of London society. There can be no more complete misapprehension; rather we should say that Mr. Gladstone's fault was that his confidence in the power and influence of England was so complete that he believed in international affairs she could afford to surrender matters of immediate interest to herself for the sake of what he believed to be justice and generosity. But above all, to him and to many others, the whole European system as it existed at that time was very repugnant. The foundation on which it was based was always the preparation for war, even if at any particular moment it was desired to avoid war. For England to come into this system and to take once more a leading part in continental affairs, implied that she should not

shrink from embarking on a binding engagement under certain circumstances to support her policy in arms, and if she did this, she was bound to make such preparations as would insure that she was able to do so with success. But to Mr. Gladstone, the end of policy was the reduction of armaments. Between him and Prince Bismarck there could be no cordial co-operation.

For students of the present day, nothing could be more interesting or instructive than the picture which we have here of the old continental system; it will surely only stimulate the efforts which are now being made to place international relations on a new footing.

J. W. HEADLAM-MORLEY

*September, 1928*

# GERMAN DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS

## CHAPTER I

### THE WAR SCARE OF 1875

#### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

**T**HE years immediately succeeding the Franco-German War of 1870-71 were in view of foreign affairs, very uneventful; no question arose which involved British interests.

The first volume of the German work is occupied almost entirely with the settlement of the terms of peace with France after the war, with the execution of the Treaty, and with the withdrawal of the German troops which occupied the eastern department of France as a guarantee of payment of the war indemnity. In all this, though it was closely followed by the English Press, the British Government had no concern, and no papers are included in the volume dealing with the relations between Germany and England.

During the years 1873-74, there was, however, a noticeable deterioration in the relations between France and Germany. This was largely due to the effect on Catholic opinion in all countries of the open conflict between the Prussian Government and the Roman Church, generally known as the Kulturkampf. Expression was given to this feeling by pronouncements of Bishops both in France and in Belgium, and apprehensions arose that popular feeling might bring about a coalition hostile to Germany.

It was suggested that Marshal MacMahon, depending on the Royalist and Catholic party in France, might aim at a coalition with Austria hostile to Germany. In consequence, Bismarck, while always insisting that he desired the maintenance of peace, addressed warnings to the French Government.

In October, 1873, Count Arnim, German Ambassador at Paris, said to the Duke de Broglie: 'Every Government which does not only talk of its love of peace in general but does all in its

power to accustom the Nation to the idea of living permanently at peace with us can depend on our meeting it. It, however, we see that the Government cannot give, or will not give guarantees of this kind, we shall have to seek security for a peaceful existence in some other way.'

And again, on October 30th, Bismarck wrote to Arnim: 'No Government would be so foolish if, contrary to its wishes, war had to be considered unavoidable, as to leave to its opponents the choice of time and opportunity, and to await the moment which would be the most agreeable to the enemy. The German business world requires a clear political horizon, and even before the war of 1870, often gave expression to the view that the outbreak of a war would be less harmful to it than the constant threat of war.'

And again in January, 1874: 'If French policy makes itself subservient to the hostile endeavours of the Roman curia, we should consider ourselves as threatened, and have to consider methods of defence.'

In the beginning of 1875, the situation took a more acute form; alarm was raised at the progress of the reforms in the French Army. In particular, the law of the Cadres, whereby units intended to come into existence in the event of war, nevertheless maintained a permanent Cadre, was interpreted as showing possibility of war at no long distant date; moreover, an order was placed in Germany by the French Government for 10,000 cavalry horses. Bismarck, though he recognised and acknowledged that war was not to be expected at any rate during the next year, none the less regarded the situation as serious; an order was issued prohibiting the export of horses to France, and, in a very confidential despatch of April 11th, 1875, Bülow, then Secretary of State, wrote to Count Münster, the Ambassador in London, enclosing a copy of the General Staff's report on the new French Cadre Law. In the course of this he said:

... Your Excellency will gather from it how this new French Armaments Regulation is looked upon from a competent military point of view. There can be no doubt that the French Government's plans for putting the Army into condition for striking, extend far beyond the needs of a peaceful policy and the material strength of the country. This fact is the best explanation for the frequent assumptions of the foreign Press, apparently shared by certain Cabinets, that Germany is seeking to renew the struggle with France. Those Courts, which are rightly concerned in the maintenance of peace—and none more than ourselves—would do well to speak out in this sense in Paris and there call attention to the consequences of these evident preparations for war. You are not commissioned to be the first to speak. This communication is intended as a completion of

the material comprising your political information, and you will give it the importance that you think proper.' /

German Note.

On April 5th, 1875, a letter, dated Vienna, and headed 'New Alliances' was published in the *Cölnische Zeitung*. Arguing from the recent great increase of French military preparations, and in particular the Cadres Law, also from the efforts to establish a clerical Monarchy and a French-Austrian-Italian-Papal alliance, i.e. a 'Catholic League against a Prussianised Germany', it inferred a direct preparation for a 'war of Revenge'.

This utterance by the *Cölnische Zeitung* was followed by the famous article in the *Post* of April 9th, 'Ist der Krieg in Sicht?' For a long time it was supposed that the article was inspired by Bismarck; but as a matter of fact, it was written independently by its author, Constantina Rössler, and the Imperial Chancellor had nothing to do with it. The *Post* article, also, considered that the danger of a war of revenge was threatened. It quoted, in support, Marshal MacMahon's demand to extend his Presidentship for a period of at least ten years, as indicating a desire to direct in person the war of revenge, as Head of the State. Referring to the Ultramontane intrigues in Austria and Italy directed against Germany, the *Post* pointed to the unconcealed jubilation with which the French clerical Press hailed the idea of a journey by the Emperor Francis Joseph to Venice, as though it would set the seal on the Austro-Italian alliance for France. An article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, however, denied the fears expressed by the *Post* regarding Austria and Italy, but emphasised instead the anxiety induced by the French military preparations. 'There are certainly disquieting elements in the measures, partly realised and partly decided upon, by the French for the reorganisation of their Army. It is clear that these measures are not based on any sound theory of re-establishing the armed strength of the French, for any nation, however wealthy, can only stand the extra burden thrust upon it for quite a short time,-- and that preparations *ad hoc* have been consistently pressed forward, with an object, clear to every seeing man.'

In a speech to the Reichstag (February 9th, 1876) Bismarck openly denied the official origin of the *Post* article: 'To my knowledge I have never had an article written for this paper, and certainly not the one headed "Krieg in Sicht". But I never found fault with it, for I find that, if one has the feeling that a minority in any country is pressing for war, one ought to raise an outcry in order to make the majority pay attention to it. Majorities do not usually desire war.' This was corroborated by Rössler, the writer of the article, in conversation with Landrat von Tiedemann, afterwards Chief of the Imperial Chancery. (See Tiedemann's *Memoirs*, II, 29 (1909). See also *Bismarck-Erinnerungen*, by Baron L. von Ballhausen, p. 71 (1920).)

[The apprehensions that peace was endangered were shared by the British Government, and this caused some annoyance at Berlin, as the following documents show.]

I. 259

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
April 13th, 1875.

*Confidential.*

Lord Derby returned from his country seat last Friday, and I visited him at his request the same afternoon. /

The disturbing leading article in the *Post* had become known here that morning, and I found the Minister, usually so calm, in a somewhat excited state of mind. He said that it almost seemed as though the fears in Paris of an attack by Germany were not altogether unfounded.

I replied that the very excessive military preparations in France were bound to excite a suspicion in the German Government that the French, however unreasonable it might appear, were seriously contemplating a war of revenge. The recent laws and regulations, in particular the Cadres-law, would raise the French peace-strength to a pitch unjustifiable in quiet times, and seemingly destined for use in a war against Germany.

Lord Derby remarked that from the French side an absolute assurance had been given of the intention of only so far reorganising the Army, as to make it possible for France to regain a position in Europe, commanding respect.

No single leading statesman in France believed in the possibility of a successful war against Germany. According to reports received by the British Government from various quarters, the Army was in a very bad condition, far worse than before the War, both as regards discipline and also the quality of the men themselves. . . . For the next ten years an attack by France was only imaginable, supposing Germany were involved in a war with another Power. The new Army organisation, and in particular, the large Cadres, existed so far only on paper.

I replied that we in Germany knew more about the condition of the French Army and of the extent of its armament, and that this had gone much further than a mere reorganisation of the forces for a country with so heavy a burden of debt. There was no need to assure Lord Derby of the obvious fact that Germany did not wish to fight France, and I considered him to be far too good a politician to take his opinions from the Press, or from unfriendly rumours of Germany's hostile intentions and aggressive attitude.

My arguments seemed to produce some effect on Lord Derby, though his belief in the French desire for peace appeared very strong.

Lord Lyons, the Ambassador in Paris, is here on leave, and I have had several opportunities of meeting him. He dined with me yesterday. He believes that war on the part of the French is impossible for the next ten years. He expressed himself in the same sense as Lord Derby, only even more strongly. I may tell Your Highness in confidence that I have a very poor opinion of Lord Lyons' judgment, as he is considered by the abler politicians here not to be competent. In America, as well

as in France during the last War, he was not very successful, and his reports are said to have been of very small value.

I felt bound to remark upon this for it certainly is important to know how a diplomat in so prominent a position as his, is viewed in his own country.

I had also the honour of spending some time with the Prince of Wales a day or two ago, and I found him still entirely imbued with the French impressions. . . .

The Prince had been in Paris, and had conversed with Marshal MacMahon. The Marshal had complained particularly concerning the prohibition by Germany of the export of horses. The year before only 600 horses had been brought in from Germany.

I replied to the Prince that the Marshal's information was incorrect, for I knew personally a dealer, who had delivered several thousands in the previous year, and that there had been submitted vouchers for contracts for over 10,000 horses, before the German Government decided to prohibit the export.

I reassured the Prince, so far as I was able, and begged him not to trust overmuch to French communications.

The *Post* article caused a great sensation here at first, and was made the most of by papers that are hostile to us. *The Times* and the *Hour*, however, adopted a perfectly correct tone from the first. The Stock Exchange paid no attention whatever to the various rumours, so that the artificially stimulated excitement of the public quickly subsided.

I. 272

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, FOREIGN SECRETARY, *May 9th, 1875*  
*Autograph Draft.* *Lord Odo Russell*

The English Ambassador came to see me this morning and made the following communication :

Lord Derby had written to him : ' Her Majesty's Government have observed with great regret that a sullen unrest is permeating Europe; the immediate cause for this is the armaments which France has recently arranged for. It is known that our military authorities look on these armaments as a great danger to peace, and Count Münster has expressed himself to this effect.

The British Government on its side does not believe that the French Government has any warlike intentions or is arming for the recovery of the lost provinces.

'It would be very happy if on its side, it could do anything to abate the unrest and restore the confidence which has been destroyed.

'Lord Odo Russell is instructed to make this communication officially, and to place himself at the disposal of the Imperial Government.'



The Ambassador concluded his communication, which is reproduced almost verbally, by saying that he has only just received these instructions, and he begged me to bring them to the knowledge of the Chancellor.

*Foot Note*  
[Prince Bismarck ascribes the unrest to the following causes: the Press of France, Austrian Poland, Russia, Belgium and even of England; an international league of the Roman Catholic priesthood; and speculation by the great banking houses and influential politicians on a slump in prices.]

# I. 273

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, *May 12th*,  
1875

## *Extract.*

An examination of the documents filed in the Archives of the Embassy for the Spring of 1867 will show you how I justified my strenuous efforts at that time to remove the war menace, following on the Luxemburg affair, chiefly by the argument that a war between two such powerful nations as Germany and France could not be settled in one campaign alone, but that a series of wars would result, because the defeated party, especially if it were France, would not rest easy under its defeat. The present state of general unrest proves that this prognostication was correct. In 1870 France broke the peace in the most wanton fashion and no one stepped in to prevent this act of folly; least of all did England remember her former expressed intention 'to knock down the first who breaks the peace'. On the contrary, she actually showed her sympathy with the aggressor to the extent of undertaking to represent the interests of France in Germany.

Your Excellency will please to inform the British Ministers . . . that the best way [to quiet the state of unrest] is, and will be, to cease to credit the tendencious calumniations of German policy, which have found a place even in the English Press. If the British Cabinet would speak in a peaceful sense to the French Government and so conduce to calm people's minds, we should be grateful to Lord Derby. . . .

# I. 277

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, FOREIGN SECRETARY, *May 12th*,  
1875

The Italian Minister has just communicated to me confidentially under instructions from his Government, the contents of a telegram, as follows:

The British Government has announced in Rome that it intends to bring influence to bear in Berlin in favour of peace. It believes in the peaceful intentions of France. The situation, however, is very serious, and the British Government calls upon Italy to second it in these efforts. Signor Visconti-Venosta has replied that his Minister in Berlin reported that there was every reason to believe that peace was desired in Berlin also, and that his Government saw no ground sufficient to justify any such movement. Count Launay (the Minister) is, however, to announce, in connection with this démarche—which originated in Paris—how fervently the Italian Government shares the common wish of every Power to assure peace.

The Italian Minister then said confidentially, that the whole trouble was a cry of alarm from Paris. Everyone there knew who had written The Times article. For this very reason every Frenchman one met in the street exclaimed: 'It is not M. Decazes who inspired the article.'

#### *German Note.*

The article referred to was one published against Germany on May 6th and entitled 'A French Scare'. According to it, the military party in Germany regarded the reorganisation of the French Army, not so much as an immediate menace, but as the forerunner of a terrible military power, which might ally itself with other States, and the Germans considered the moment favourable to secure for themselves a long period of peace and prosperity by means of a preventive war. The diplomatic representatives of Germany differed in their views as to the inspirer of this article.

On May 22nd, 1875, the Ambassador, Prince Hohenlohe, reported that its writer was de Blowitz, the well-known *Times* Paris Correspondent, himself. Count Münster, Ambassador in London, on the authority of the owner of *The Times*, reported on June 28th that it had come to de Blowitz from a French source, and was probably dictated by the Duc Decazes himself, or at any rate inspired by him. De Blowitz's own *Memoirs* (p. 107) state that the article was written under the direct inspiration of the Duc Decazes. The Duc's attempt to shift the responsibility for it on to the shoulders of the German Ambassador (see G. Hanotaux's *Hist. de la France contemporaine*, German translation, II, 2, 1907, p. 297) is accordingly unworthy of attention and is supported neither by the German documents nor by Hohenlohe's *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

#### I. 278

BÜLOW, FOREIGN SECRETARY, TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
AMBASSADOR AT ST. PETERSBURG, May 14th, 1875

The English Cabinet first by Lord Odo Russell to us, and secondly, by the same Ambassador to the Emperor Alexander and the Russian Chancellor, has expressed its anxiety at the supposed danger to European peace arising from the relations between Germany and France, and has offered its services for the main-

tenance of peace. It was expressly stated that there was a threatening symptom in the excitement which had been caused in Germany by French armaments, an excitement which England does not for her part share.

In the same way, as we learnt, Lord Derby has invited the Italian Government to co-operate in his peaceful endeavours. We do not know if the same thing has happened with other Governments.

In view of this procedure, which is to some extent surprising, it is a satisfaction to us that the Czar Alexander and Prince Gortschakow in complete agreement with our own view, are not able to recognise anywhere danger to European peace, and have again convinced themselves by the impression they have received in Berlin of the peaceful nature of our intentions towards France. In the same way, to our satisfaction, the Italian Cabinet has made pointless the English *démarche* with the observation, that in accordance with the news available in Rome, nothing is known of any dangers to relations between Germany and France.

I. 279

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, May 14th, 1875

*Extract. Very Confidential.*

Although the tone adopted by *The Times* in its Paris correspondence and its recent leading articles against Germany, combined with the desire of the British Government to intervene as a mediator, as Lord Derby commissioned Lord Odo Russell to suggest to us, has surprised us and has necessarily seemed to be a disquieting symptom of unfounded suspicion, ascribable to French insinuations in London, I found it difficult to give credence to the fact, recounted to me by Prince Gortschakoff with some glee, that Lord Odo Russell had received telegraphic instructions to support the Czar's peace-efforts with the whole weight of British influence. My instinct was to deny the authenticity of this story, and to assume that the Russian Minister hoped to turn us against England. The Emperor Alexander assured me personally and with an expression of satisfaction, that the anxiety of the Cabinet at St. James's was quite unnecessary.

My astonishment was still greater when I learned confidentially that Italy also had been urged by the British Government to lend her efforts towards the maintenance of peace in Europe. To what other Powers the British extended invitation to help extinguish a fire that never was lit is not known here so far—  
~~Vienna even is suggested.~~

—If only England had shown a tenth part of the eagerness in 1870,

that she has developed at this most unseasonable moment, in restraining France from her wanton attack on Germany, that whole sanguinary war would have been avoided. It is disagreeable to us to reflect how disproportionate were the efforts that England made then to stop the French attack on Germany compared with the eagerness now shown in London to bring difficulties and suspicion on the political attitude imposed on us by the results of the war with France and the unconcealed desire for revenge on the part of the French. We must draw the conclusion that England was prepared to raise Europe against us and in France's favour, if at any time we intended—which is now not the case—to make military or diplomatic preparations against the renewal of French attacks.

In the general interests of humanity one can understand and approve all efforts directed towards preventing war and bloodshed. But from the political standpoint we must entirely fail to understand how the British Government has now come to ascribe to us war-like intentions and (as we have just heard from a Russian source) has communicated its anxiety regarding the bellicose proclivities of Germany's policy in Vienna and St. Petersburg, and even does not hesitate to insinuate that we may possibly first intend to attack Austria. [We do not believe that our attitude hitherto towards England, and especially the present Cabinet of Queen Victoria, has deserved to be misjudged with such a mass of credulity for aspersions against German policy. This phenomenon is to me all the more astonishing, since Lord Odo Russell has always reported from here in a contrary sense. I consider him much too good and truthful an observer, considering how long he has had before him the evidence of our friendly policy, to have written any differently.]

*German Note.*

See the despatches and letters of Lord Odo Russell contained in Lord Newton's *Lord Lyons : A Record of British Diplomacy*, II, 72 et seq. Lord Newton's account does not bear out Bismarck's assumption.

If we would seek for the source of the untruthful and mischievous statements, which have apparently joined in a single stream in London, it is certain that a part of the fault is to be borne by certain of the individual representatives of England abroad, in particular Lord Lyons, who seems to live entirely in the Catholic and French atmosphere, and to pursue the policy of Norfolk House rather than that of the British Government. . . .

[Prince Bismarck then returned to his constant complaint against female influence in Government affairs. The intimacy of the daughters of the French Ambassador, Vicomte Gontaut, and of the wife of the French Military Attaché with the Empress's Household, aroused his suspicions.]

Moreover, it has been indicated to me, and I think it not unlikely that the private correspondence between the Empress and Queen Victoria may have exercised some influence upon Lord Derby's attitude and opinions, for from the English point of view, it could hardly be imagined how difficult a *partie-pris* in high places in any country against the policy of the Monarch and his Government makes the position of responsible Ministers here. It would greatly relieve and assist my judgment, if I might accept this as accounting for the unexpected attitude on the part of Lord Derby; for the British Minister could scarcely be held responsible for it, if he has accepted communications coming from such a source as trustworthy.

German Note.

On May 31st, 1875, Lord Derby, speaking in the House of Lords, laid the blame for the war-rumours on Germany. According to *The Times* report of June 1st, he said: 'Language had been held by persons of the highest authority and position—statements had been made by the semi-official Press of Germany—to the effect that the French Army was being increased to a degree which was dangerous to Germany and exceeded the requirements of France, and that . . . this course manifested a determination on the part of France to renew the War of 1870-71 at the earliest period at which she would be in a position to do so. It was further said that if such was to be taken as the object which France had in view, it might not be the duty of the German Government to wait till France had made her preparations, but that Government might feel itself called upon to take the initiative. It was said that Germany did not desire war, but that if war was to be avoided, it seemed necessary that the French armaments should be discontinued. My Lords, these statements were, as I have observed, made by persons of high position in Germany, and they were repeated in other countries.' The Report of Reuter's Bureau added the following sentence to the speech: 'This language was repeated here by the German Ambassador', indicating that Count Münster had spoken officially in the sense of a Preventive War. Lord Derby, however, denied having used the words. By 'persons of the highest authority and position' General Field-Marshal Count Moltke is indicated in particular. (Cf. Hansard. Vol. 224, col. 1096.)

I. 284-5

BÜLOW, FOREIGN SECRETARY TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON,  
June 3rd, 1875

*Extract.*

We now have a decided impression that strong anxiety regarding our policy has taken firm hold in England, and has spread from there on to the Continent. We believe it is genuine and not put on for other purposes. The only question is whence it arose. The fears did not originate in England, but have flowed into it and have found there a soil evidently suitable for their growth. The most obvious source lies in the much spoken of correspondence in *The Times* dated from Paris,

on May 6th. We now know that it was really written there, but that its great influence was due to its appearing in that world-wide newspaper. (Cf. despatch of May 12th.) . . .

The British Government has not confined itself, as did Lord Derby in the extract from his speech of May 31st, which was telegraphed to us, to the task of calming the mutual trepidations of Germany and France with as little ostentation as possible. But we have learned, and naturally with regret, from St. Petersburg and Vienna, that the British Government has been pursuing its misconceived attempt at soothing even there. We have it on the very best authority that in both capitals British influence has officially brought a charge against us of threatening to endanger peace and of desiring war in the first instance, if you please, against Austria. This is the insinuation made to the Austrian Cabinet by the British Embassy according to this communication. . . .

Even if the British *démarche* has not in fact resulted in some material injury to us, we are still left with the painful impression that the British Ministry is attempting (we know not with what temporary success) to engage the Cabinets of Europe in common action against us, and is needlessly risking its good relations with Germany. In face of this realisation, our confidence in the benevolence of British policy cannot be confirmed, especially as we have given no cause in any way for quarrel, but have rather been at pains to show how highly we have valued the good relations between the two peoples.

For this very reason, and being conscious of having fostered these good relations with all our strength, we cannot remain indifferent to the manner in which the British Government has come to put faith in the insinuations against us, and without any enquiry from or reference to us, has so acted that we have appeared to the Cabinets of Europe in the light of disturbers of the peace. We cannot endorse either Lord Derby's speech of May 31st, in which he announced that he left much unsaid, or the seemingly official corollary of the speech, signed 'Verax', in *The Times* of the same day, as a relevant or complete description of the facts. The Imperial Chancellor begs Your Excellency to enquire at once of Lord Derby in confidence, mentioning that you are commissioned to do so, how the British Government arrived at the assumption that the German Government intended to break the peace, whether with France or Austria, or is doing so indirectly by demanding an explanation from France, and so placing her in a difficult position. It is to be hoped that Lord Derby's friendly disposition towards yourself will induce him to give this information willingly. If he consents, you should make use, in the form of a question, of [certain other despatches]

containing further information concerning the French Embassy and the Ultramontane calumnies.

[The necessity of a change in the representation of France in Berlin is also urged, as being essential to the restoration of good relations.]

Should, however, Lord Derby refuse the information, you will indicate that we can scarcely avoid preparing in our turn an exposition of the facts, equally designed for publication, in answer to his public declaration. . . .

I. 288-9

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN SECRETARY,  
*June 7th, 1875*

*Extract. Very confidential.*

Lord Derby's attitude,—the levity, with which this statesman gave credence to the insinuations of our enemies in the Press and in Diplomacy, has destroyed my trust in the head of the Foreign Office. . . .

Lord Derby has underrated the far-reaching importance of his action, and has given advice, without the least intention of supporting it in practice. Moreover he has posted his advice to the wrong addresses.

He genuinely believed that peace was threatened. He let himself be misled by the article in the *Post* and alarmist articles in nearly every paper in Germany, France and England. On the top of this came the outcries from the Paris Government. Also the depression in the City and amongst English business men counted for something. *Russian Chancellor*

~~The situation was used very skilfully against us by Count Beust, and I am convinced that he it was who gave Lord Derby the first idea of combined action by approaching the neutral Cabinets, under the pretence of its being in the interests of peace.~~

Count Shouvaloff corroborates me in this opinion. He related to me, that Lord Derby had said to him a short time ago that he had just been convinced afresh what a shrewd statesman and brilliant diplomat Count Beust was, and that he thought it not impossible that he would again lead the Austro-Hungarian Cabinet. Count Shouvaloff was astounded at this remark. He immediately opposed it with decision and said that he did not share Lord Derby's opinion and could only assure him that, in that event, a good understanding between Austria and Russia would be impossible for a long time to come. . . . At this moment nothing would threaten the maintenance of peace more than the return to power of Count Beust. Count Shouvaloff's calculated

and unequivocal opposition rather astonished Lord Derby, but even so he refused to share these fears.

Count Shouvaloff jestingly added : ' £80,000 a year are not enough, by themselves, to make a great statesman.'

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*June 7th, 1875*

*Private Letter.*

Your Excellency will see from my despatches, how I explained the action of Lord Derby as a peace advocate. It was a real fear of war and the attempt to regain position cheaply in Europe and win reputation as a peacemaker.

We must also not forget that the article in the *Post*, which is regarded as semi-official, was calculated to arouse a belief in the war-like intentions of Germany.

For a moment, Lord Odo Russell also, especially after conversing with Moltke, entertained serious apprehensions. I write this to Your Excellency privately and not officially, for I do not wish to do him any injury. He has since sent excellent reports and is our true friend.

I am convinced the idea of entering into communication with other Cabinets was given to Derby by our friend Beust.

I. 290-2

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 9th,*  
*1875*

*Extract. Very confidential.*

Lord Derby, who again was absent in the country for Ascot Week, came to town at my request to-day, and I spoke to him very openly. . . .

Lord Derby said: he had feared that if the notion that France desired war took firmer hold, Germany might ask France a direct question, and had believed that such a question would lead to further misunderstandings in France. He had considered it his duty to influence both sides in the interest of peace, so that such misunderstandings should not lead to war. He had never said, even in his reply to Earl Russell, that he at all believed Germany intended any such challenge to France. He was firmly convinced that both nations desired peace. The St. Petersburg affair had merely amounted to this. Lord Augustus Loftus had reported that Prince Gortchakoff wished to try in Berlin to re-establish the threatened peace, and he had asked to be allowed to promise the Prince England's support for his efforts.

This had been done, and there had been no further negotiations in St. Petersburg.



As to the negotiations in Vienna, Lord Derby had commissioned Mr. Buchanan to express to the Austrian Government the wish that it should take action in the interests of peace. No more than this. No hint of any kind, he could distinctly assure me, had been expressed that Germany had any hostile intentions towards Austria, and he had, moreover, never believed it in the slightest degree. He could tell me, however, in confidence that these fears had often been expressed to him from the side of Austria, and he had always strenuously denied them. He would mention no names.

The above proves that Count Shouvaloff's and my supposition, mentioned in my Despatch of June 7th, before I had seen Lord Derby, was correct. . . .

Lord Derby told me that he had been far from contemplating any united action by the Cabinets against Germany. . . .

I used this opportunity to explain to Lord Derby the difficulties caused by the composition of the French Embassy in Berlin, and to show that many of the intrigues and most of the hostile feeling against Germany were to be ascribed to the Ultramontanes.

Regarding his speech, Lord Derby said that *The Times* report of it was correct in the main, and he did not understand how the sentence, 'Ce langage fut répété ici par l'Ambassadeur allemand,' had come to be added. The reporter of the Telegraph Bureau must have added it on purpose. [Cf. p. 10.]

He rejected with disgust the idea mentioned in several newspapers that he had corrected his speech in an underhand fashion.

#### I. 292-3

QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE GERMAN EMPEROR, June 20th 1875<sup>1</sup>

I have read with pleasure your cordial and friendly letter of the 3rd, and sincerely rejoice to find that my anxious desire for the preservation of peace has not been misinterpreted or misunderstood by you. That Europe should be afflicted with a needless war would under any circumstances be bad enough, but you will easily understand that to me it would be doubly painful if so great a calamity had been wantonly brought about by any act or word of the German Government. I rejoice to read the expressions in which you condemn the notion of attacking the French, or any other people, merely on the suspicion of their meditating hostilities in their turn should an opportunity occur. Such a line of policy might be momentarily successful, but it

<sup>1</sup> Printed from the Draft in Lord Derby's handwriting, published in *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II, p. 408. The letter from the German Emperor, to which this is an answer, is not contained in the German Volume. It will be found in *Queen Victoria's Letters*, p. 402.

would provoke the general and just indignation of Europe, and, as you say, leave the State which adopted it without allies or sympathisers.

The alarm is over, dissipated by the thoroughly satisfactory assurances which your Ministers have been authorised to give; and it would serve no good purpose now to explain why or how it came about that the view taken here of the political situation was more serious than you think the circumstances justified. I must, however, just observe that it was not an 'occasional and lightly-made remark,' even coming from so eminent a person as Count Moltke, that caused the apprehension felt by my Ministers, and in which I personally shared. Expressions similar to that ascribed to Count Moltke have been used on many occasions, and in many places, by persons authorised by their position to speak as representatives of your Government. If, as from your letter I do not for a moment doubt, you are not fully aware of the extent to which such language has been held, you may naturally consider our apprehensions exaggerated, but it would not be difficult for me to show that this was not the case, if any good purpose could be served by going back upon a question which is now happily disposed of.

*German Note.*

On receipt of the above letter forwarded by the Emperor to him, Prince Bismarck replied in a letter (August 13th, 1875) which is not included in the Foreign Office Archives. Below is an extract, taken from Prince Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (II, 177). . . . It would have been highly interesting, if Her Majesty had given a more precise account of the origin of those war rumours. Her Majesty must have placed great confidence in the sources of them, otherwise she would not have made fresh reference to them, and the British Government would not have entered upon so serious a course of action, and one so hostile to us. I do not know whether Your Majesty thinks it feasible to take Her Majesty at her word, when she alleges that "it would be easy to prove that her fears were not exaggerated." In any case it might be important to discover the quarter from which such "mighty errors" were forwarded to Windsor . . . It is possible, indeed, that Count Münster, like Count Moltke, may have spoken academically of the benefit to be derived from an attack on France at the right moment, although I know nothing of it, and have never commissioned him to do so. It may be said that it will be no help to peace, if France receives the assurance that under no circumstances will she be attacked, and that she may do what she chooses. . . . It is not desirable to assure the adversary that we shall in all cases wait for him to attack. Therefore, I would not blame Münster, if he has incidentally spoken in this sense, and the British Government would have no right, on this account, to base official action on an unofficial utterance by an Ambassador, and without warning us, to invite other Powers to exert pressure upon us.

*German Note.*

Once the 'Krieg-in-Sicht' incident was closed, both the British and the Russian Governments made every effort to shift from their own

shoulders the responsibility for the 'famous peace-démarches,' as Prince Reuss called them. According to a statement made by Baron Jomini, interim head of the Russian Foreign Office, to Prince Reuss on June 17th, 1875, and reported by him on the same day, Lord Derby had not been able to clear his mind of his preconceived idea of actual and imminent danger of war, in spite of the forcible assurances of Count Shouvaloff, who had stayed in Berlin on May 6th, on his way through, and had convinced himself that no one there was dreaming of war. Baron Jomini stated emphatically that by the time of Count Shouvaloff's arrival in London, Lord Odo Russell's instructions, which he carried out on May 9th (q.v.), had already been despatched. Doubt is thrown upon Baron Jomini's statement by a note made by Bülow on June 6th, 1875, describing an interview with Lord Odo Russell, and showing that Count Shouvaloff's interview with Lord Derby took place on the evening of May 8th, and that after this the instructions were despatched to Lord Odo.

## I. 294

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, ST. PETERSBURG, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *July 22nd, 1875*

*Secret.*

. . . Count Shouvaloff reports that Lord Derby received him on May 9th, a Sunday (which is not his custom), and had told him that he awaited him with great impatience. The British Minister had shown much anxiety regarding the maintenance of peace, which he considered to be seriously threatened. He thought of the approaching visit of the Czar to Berlin as significant, and had therefore instructed Lord Odo Russell to support the démarche, which the Czar doubtless would make there, in the way of offering peaceful advice to the Imperial Government. Count Shouvaloff tried to reassure the Minister, and described to him the impression, which he had brought back from Berlin, and which left him in no doubt that the Imperial Cabinet had no thought of encouraging war-like plans. Lord Derby refused to give credence to these assurances. It appears further, that Lord Derby, before his conversation with Count Shouvaloff on the 9th, had already sent his instructions to Lord Odo, and that the latter had carried them out in Berlin on the 9th.

[Cf. the statement in *The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus*, II, 132 et seq.]

Count Shouvaloff's despatch does not mention that the British Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to take a direct step in urging peace on the Imperial Government. Lord Derby merely told the Count that Lord [Odo] Russell was instructed to support the Russian Emperor's démarche.

The Czar only arrived in Berlin on May 10th. Thus Shouvaloff does not mention the first instructions.

Baron Jomini's communication gave me a good opportunity

to enlighten him on the British version, which was to the effect that the British Cabinet had first received the idea from St. Petersburg. Lord Derby's instructions to Lord Odo Russell were the result of a question put by Lord [Augustus] Loftus, which mentioned Prince Gortchakoff's intention to protect in Berlin the threatened peace, and which asked for authority to assure the Russian Chancellor of England's support.

Baron Jomini was greatly astounded at this statement. He again said to me that no one here had been able to explain the real reason for the great excitement evidenced by Lord Derby's numerous telegrams to the Ambassador here. He still was seeking the solution of the riddle in vain, why the British Minister, usually so reserved, had allowed himself to be to that extent excited by rumours, which had afterwards been proved to be entirely groundless.

Lord Augustus had been very nervous and had visited Prince Gortchakoff constantly during those days. The latter, perhaps, partially shared this nervousness, which was added to by pin-pricks from Paris. Moreover, Lord Augustus may not have reported his conversations with the Chancellor correctly, and this may be the reason why Lord Derby thought that the encouragement had come from here. They have been astounded here by Lord Derby's action, and also greatly displeased at the way in which he later drew attention to the question in Parliament.

Baron Jomini added that even now the Duc Decazes and also General le Flô would not be persuaded that Count Shouvaloff had not provoked the British *démarche*, and that France had not Russia to thank for keeping the peace.

I think it not hard to guess by whom this belief of the French has been strengthened.

In spite of their satisfaction at this relief the French had again shown suspicion, and General le Flô had asked here under what conditions the maintenance of peace had been sanctioned by us. Had Russia perhaps promised in Berlin to demand of the French Government a reduction of her military measures, which Germany considered so dangerous?

Even in England there has been belief in some such conditions, though in a different form. Before his departure about ten days ago, Lord Augustus Loftus asked anxiously if it was true that Russia had promised in Berlin to persuade the other Powers, including England, to guarantee the present possessions and frontier of the German Empire.

He, Baron Jomini, had had great trouble in persuading the Ambassador that there could be no question of any such conditions, since the Czar himself was convinced that Germany had

no intention of making war. He had told both gentlemen quite clearly that it would be bad policy to refuse to believe the solemn assurances made repeatedly by His Majesty the Emperor and King, our gracious Master, as to the peaceful aims of his policy.

I refrain from giving an opinion as to whether Prince Gortchakoff is entirely free from the reproach of a similar bad policy. In any case he would be delighted to appear in the part of a benevolent mediator for peace.

It was remarkable that he then mentioned to me no syllable either of war-fears or of his conversation with Lord Augustus Loftus. It was clearly not his policy to be explicit.

I. 298

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *July 28th,*  
1875

*Confidential.*

When I took leave of Lord Derby he asked me to remember him to you and to assure you that he genuinely wishes good relations with Germany, and really could not understand how any doubt could have arisen as to his intentions and his friendly feelings towards Germany. It seems, he added, that there is still a certain distrust of England in the German Press. I added that he could not be surprised at that. The circumstance, that before the English Cabinet had in any way addressed the Imperial Government, they had started negotiations with other States and represented Germany as creating discord, necessarily created a belief among those who did not fully understand his good intentions that England was preparing a coalition against Germany, peaceful at its beginning though it might be, and was going over to the side of France. The English Press had strengthened this view by its attacks on Germany.

Lord Derby repeated that he very greatly regretted this interpretation on the German side, and that his efforts which had no other object than to remove misunderstandings had themselves been misunderstood.

Contrary to his nature, Lord Derby became very lively and assured me that the only interest of England was to keep peace in Europe, and there was no better security for this than a strong Germany. England has no interests opposed to those of Germany; with France, it is different, and no peaceful and reasonable Englishman can avoid the conviction that a too powerful France would naturally be more dangerous to England than a powerful Germany.

For this reason he strongly regrets the momentary annoyance and hopes that the best understanding and confidence will soon

be restored between the two countries, and will be more and more strengthened.

I believe that Lord Derby's words are really genuinely meant and that he himself does not regard his last diplomatic campaign as fortunate.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EASTERN CRISIS, 1876<sup>1</sup>

#### II. 29

##### *German Note.*

Prince Bismarck had from the beginning of the complications in the East in the summer of 1875 kept aloof as far as possible. His chief efforts were, as expressed by Bülow, Secretary of State, in a despatch of December 8th, 1875, to Alvensleben, Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, centred in the maintenance of the Drei-Kaiser-Bündnis, with its basis of freedom of action, and in adherence to the joint decisions and actions of Russia and Austria combined. Bismarck expressly discouraged any inclination to influence in any direction the development of affairs in Turkey. Nevertheless, it seemed to the Imperial Chancellor that the observation that 'Count Andrássy and Prince Gortchakoff were seeking to draw nearer to each other than either of them was seeking to draw near to us', and even more, the certainty that Russia was working for a closer understanding with France over the Eastern Question, indicated for Germany a rapprochement with England.

In a conversation with Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador, about which Bülow (Foreign Secretary), on January 3rd, 1876, in a private letter (quoted below), speaks with intentional reserve, Bismarck appears to have employed the idea of an attack on Bosnia and Herzegovina as a ballon d'essai with Austria, as against which Russia should be indemnified in Bessarabia, and England by being given a free hand in Egypt. According to Goriainoff (*Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles*, 1910, p. 314) Bismarck spoke, as reported by the Russian Ambassador, d'Oubril, January 5th, 1876, even more forcibly in opposition to him (d'Oubril). Hans Plehn, however, exaggerates Bismarck's foreign policy after the founding of the Empire, when he speaks of a plan, as coming from Bismarck himself (*Munich and Berlin*, 1920, p. 66 et seq.).

#### II. 29

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON,  
*January 4th, 1876*

##### *Confidential.*

I beg to inform you that the Imperial Chancellor had a long conversation with Lord Odo Russell (British Ambassador) on the attitude of the Powers towards the Turkish question. In

<sup>1</sup> For the events dealt with in this and the following Chapters, cf. *the Life of Lord Salisbury*; *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II, and *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. 67, pp. 269, etc.

promoting this conversation the Prince hoped to bring about an exchange of ideas if possible and thus to get into closer touch with Lord Derby. In this sense he addressed Lord Odo : We (Germany) were not directly concerned in the Eastern Question and had up to the present been content to place our influence disinterestedly at the disposal of our friends. He regretted that England, to whom our attitude towards the question was known, appeared unwilling to make use of it. It was rather curious that in that country, in spite of the great interest that this question contained for it, no one was disposed to attend to expressions of opinion. The present Reform proposals only possessed a secondary interest for us, and we were prepared to endorse any upon which our friends were agreed. It was indifferent to Germany whether the Bosnians, after their long course of ill-treatment at the hands of the Turks, would submit to it any longer. The present proposals were unlikely to result in a practical solution of the matter, and answered by no means all the questions which were sure to be raised because of them.

In his confidential remarks in answer to this expression of opinion, the British Ambassador referred, with but little concealment, to the matter chiefly from his own private point of view and from that of the English Press. Whilst lightly suggesting that the British reserve towards us was possibly connected with the embarrassment left behind by the *faux pas* committed in May, he made no concealment of the fact that England had fundamentally abandoned her traditional policy in this question. There were but very few Members of Parliament who would be still in favour of an adventure comparable with the Crimean War. England had, as always, a life and death interest in preserving her communications with India. The illusion that Turkey possessed the means and the men sufficient to defend and maintain herself was at an end.

When the conversation touched on the possible consequences of the existing position and the means by which the complications might be simplified, Lord Odo suggested, as being perhaps least objectionable to England, an occupation by Austria and inferentially the annexation of the insurgent provinces. England possessed no great interests, either commercially or politically, in the Slav provinces of Turkey, for these interests only started on the further side of the Balkans. It was incidentally mentioned that if Austria, in spite of the Hungarian opposition, was driven in the direction of annexation, the Russian Government might seek for compensation, and Prince Gortchakoff, in order to fulfil his reputation as the restorer of all that had been lost in the Peace of Paris, might look to regain the part of Bessarabia, which had been surrendered at that time, and that Roumania would thereby



lose the Mouths of the Danube—a loss more serious for Germany than for England, as our trade there is more considerable.

Thus far the exchange of ideas or perhaps tentative suggestions between the Prince and Lord Odo. Lord Odo welcomed the implied rapprochement with eager thankfulness, which corresponded, as we knew, to his political inclinations, but I need scarcely add that the Imperial Chancellor started from his ever firm conviction that the English, *sua bona si norint*, possess no greater political interest on the Continent than the existence of a strong and peaceful Germany and the maintenance of good relations with her. Formerly this interest led her nearer to Austria and caused her to mistrust Prussia. Germany is now more than merely heir to that old Central European Power. Bearing in mind this axiom and also the eminently peaceful character of British policy in Europe, a certain increase of friendship between England and France over the Eastern Question might now offer security for the maintenance of peace, as France would be held back by the British love of peace.

Seeing that I am commissioned by His Highness to communicate to you these highly confidential expressions of opinion, I earnestly beg you not to speak of them, but merely to use them for your own information and as a means of controlling Derby and Disraeli.

I beg to add that the conversation also turned to England's position as regarded Egypt. The Imperial Chancellor shares Your Excellency's views on Lord Derby's present extraordinary attitude. Lord Odo, who supports this judgment, was of opinion that Disraeli will again initiate a more forward course of action in Parliament and make a bolder exhibition of his own personal policy.

#### *German Note.*

The 'Berlin Memorandum' of May 13th, 1876, at the time of the Conference of Prince Gortchakoff and Count Andrassy with Prince Bismarck in Berlin (May 11th–14th), had proclaimed the complete unity of the three Imperial Powers regarding the Eastern Question. But this unity was and remained only one of appearance, even when Russia and Austria, after the outbreak of the Balkan War, had in the interview at Reichstadt come to an understanding concerning the possibility of the collapse of the Turkish hegemony. The danger appeared imminent that Austria would be dragged into the ever-increasing antagonism between England and Russia. At this point the leader of Russian foreign policy conceived the plan of a great European Congress (which only took place two years later). As shown by two reports by Schweinitz, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, August 6th and 7th, the Emperor Alexander and Prince Gortchakoff desired that Germany, as being a disinterested Power, should take the initiative in calling a Conference consisting of the Prime Ministers of the six European Powers, or better still, a Congress.

Bismarck himself, as the documents show, returned, after incidentally,

sounding Lord Odo Russell and d'Oubril in the beginning of January, 1876, to the standpoint of 'Germany as a disinterested Power' and clung to it both before and after the Conference of the three Chancellors in Berlin (May 11th-14th) and equally so before and after Reichstadt. For this period the documentary evidence is omitted. The 'Berlin Memorandum' is printed in de Marten's *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traité's*, 2nd Series, Vol. III, p. 12 seq.; *Das Staats-archiv*, Vol. XXX (1877), p. 270 seq., etc. On Reichstadt, cf. E. von Werthomer's *Count Julius Andrassy*, Vol. II (1913), p. 296 seq.

## II. 31

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*August 14th, 1876*

I beg Your Excellency not to wait to communicate orally Herr von Schweinitz's two Reports, but to forward them at once to His Majesty along with a covering note of my views, as follows:

I consider it dangerous to the Kaiserbundniss, to peace and to Germany's relations towards her allies, for a Congress or a Conference to be held (I attach no importance to the distinction between these two indefinite ideas). The danger to the Kaiserbundniss rests on the fact that Austria's interests lie much nearer to those of England than of Russia, and that a Congress will sharply accentuate this difference, seeing that Austria will be obliged to choose between the two absolutely opposed interests of England and Russia. Austria will be forced to declare herself for one or the other for the time being. Each Cabinet will have to negotiate not under the mediation of one equally friendly to both, and itself interested in keeping the peace, as is the German Cabinet, but will be hampered by the interference of other participants in the business, whose object will be to disturb the friendly relations between Russia and Austria. France, a competitor for Russia's friendship, will bid up the claims of Russia and the personal importance of Gortchakoff; England, realising that her interests no longer coincide with those of Russia, will try to induce Austria to follow England's lead, and Count Andrassy will find it extremely difficult to withstand the pressure of circumstances. Up to the present the Drei-Kaiser-Bundniss has been the security for peace. If it is weakened and relaxed by the deliberate rapprochement to one another of Austria-England and Russia-France respectively, the impossibility of reconciling Austrian, Russian and British interests in the East will lead to war. I forbear to mention Italy for reasons that are far too deep to enter into in this letter. Germany would be called upon day after day to act as umpire between the two hostile groups at the Congress, the most thankless task that could fall to us; and as we could never see our way from the outset to seize and bind fast either of the two parties, the most probable result

for us would be that our three friends, Russia, Austria and England, would leave the Congress in a state of annoyance against us, because neither had received the support that she expected from us. Peace would be further endangered by the close contact, in which Prince Gortchakoff and Lord Beaconsfield would be placed. Both are possessed by a truly dangerous vanity, and that of the Englishman is perhaps the more dangerous, as there is less political experience or power of judgment to control it. The tension would be increased by the use of the French language, in which Gortchakoff and Decazes are undoubtedly superior to the English Minister and the others. Gortchakoff's motive in pressing for the Congress is certainly not the hope of reaching an agreement of the Powers regarding common action in the East, but simply to present the affair in a tableau in which he, Gortchakoff, may play the most conspicuous part. Any other apparent motives he may have conceived, when he obtained the Emperor's sanction, may be set aside. To me the whole movement is but a fresh proof how greatly a statesman's conscientiousness may be injured by a temptation to pose before Europe, and I can but use all my powers of persuasion against our lending a hand towards the realisation of this plan. The necessity for us of keeping clear of a position so thankless and so dangerous for all our foreign relations is quite sufficient to indicate our course to us. Just because we are the only really disinterested Power, and have no pressing motive for joining either group, we should have to bear the responsibility for the almost certain failure of the Congress, and as no interest of our own could be assigned as the motive, each time there was a difference of opinion, every one of our decisions would bear the appearance of a deliberate choice between our more and less intimate friends. The same motives, which make it impossible for us, as members of the Drei-Kaiser-Bundniss, to act as umpire between Austria and Russia, the same reasons, which constrain us to wait until Russia and Austria come to terms together, and to avoid exercising our influence on either, all point to our holding aloof from a Congress.

We should avoid taking as final all these objections to the present Russian proposals and announcing our definite rejection of them immediately. It is probably preferable to say that, whilst being in full sympathy with the lot of the Christians, we nevertheless do not consider ourselves called upon suddenly at this moment to desert our normal attitude of abstention for the part of European leadership. If we seize the initiative, we shall be saddled with a certain degree of responsibility for the success, of the policy, and we see little prospect of peace as the outcome of a Congress. On the contrary, we fear that the points of differ-

ence between Russia and England would be sharpened thereby, and also that the existing good relations between our allies, Russia and Austria, would be threatened and weakened. If the initiative were taken by another party, we should gladly and by preference take account of the wishes of Russia, but should consider a Congress advisable then and only then, when the prospect of a peaceable outcome should appear more assured than at present.

## II. 34

### MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *August 30th, 1876*

In ordinary circumstances I should not have conceived the idea that it might be advisable, after the meeting of the Emperors William I and Alexander II at Ems (June 14th-18th, 1876) to enter into relations once more. But the circumstances are exceptional and the Emperor Alexander is placed in an especially difficult position by the pressure of Russian public opinion and by his own peaceful disposition. The feeling is constantly expressed in Russia that she has been coolly treated by us. . . . Situated as I am at Varzin, my admittedly imperfect impression is that of late Gortchakoff has appeared more inclined to join with England in opposing Andrassy than to come to an understanding with the latter. . . .

It is improbable, moreover, that Russia intends to join England for any other purpose than to secure a cessation of hostilities, as Gortchakoff incidentally indicates. But if it were the case,—if agreements impinging on the relations of individual Powers towards Turkey (a subject of minor importance to us) and touching the more vital point of the future mutual relations of those Powers, that are friendly to us, were in prospect between England and Russia, we should in my opinion be obliged not to disturb them, but to further them; at the same time we should have to do all in our power to present it in a form most palatable to Austria. We cannot too quickly begin to collect precise information on the subject so interesting to us, of the actualities of Russia's relations with England on the one hand and with Austria on the other, and of their reactions on France's position. Owing to Schweinitz's absence we are forced to be content with whatever Gortchakoff sees fit to communicate through d'Oubril or Count Berchem (German Chargé d'affaires at St. Petersburg), and that is not always trustworthy. We can place just as little confidence in the Oubril-Gortchakoff channel for our replies. I therefore think it best always to take our political enquiry to the Emperor in person . . . and to assure His Majesty personally, and not through d'Oubril and Gortchakoff, that under no circumstances will we commit ourselves

to any hostile, or even diplomatic, manœuvres against Russia. My impression is that it would not be waste of pains to reassure the Emperor on this subject. We can without injury to ourselves allow and even encourage any course which will bring Russia nearer to Austria; this has up to the present been our policy. But I also consider it practicable for us to apply the same language, always without prejudice to ourselves, in the event of any understanding between Russia and England, but again with the proviso mentioned above, that in such a case we should maintain an attitude of friendly mediation towards Austria. In the unlikely event of a lasting alliance between Russia and England, if we take a long view of the circumstances, the addition of ourselves, as the third party, might turn out to be more workable than our relations hitherto with the Russo-Austrian combination. However, it is most unlikely that a friendship between Russia and England will either be realised or prove at all permanent. . . .

[The opportunity for sounding the Russian Emperor arrived, when on September 2nd, 1876, certain German officers, headed by General Field-Marshal von Manteuffel, were invited to attend the Russian Army Manœuvres at Warsaw. Manteuffel's report, dated from Warsaw, September 6th, 1876, deals mainly with the Emperor of Russia's conception of his responsibilities towards the Christians living under Turkish rule. With regard to Prince Bismarck's enquiry concerning Russian relations with England he said:]

The only subject discussed so far with England by Russia has been that of the Armistice (between Turkey and Servia), its duration and the Russian contention that it should be treated as standing by itself and not as being one with the Peace negotiations, and that no negotiations whatever on the Peace should take place in Constantinople itself. Prince Gortchakoff also declared that England had in fact sought to enter with Russia, to the exclusion of the other Powers, into more extensive negotiations. Up to the present Russia had refused to commit herself, and had, moreover, so informed the other Courts. The Prince added that England was again initiating so-called Conversations on the subject. . . .

My general impression is that His Majesty the Emperor Alexander cherishes no *arrière-pensée* with regard to the Eastern Question, as far as policy is concerned, that his feelings of religion and humanity suffer under the atrocities, which are going on in the East, that he desires to keep the peace, but that he is undergoing an internal struggle as to how long he ought to hesitate to use the power that God has given him, to put an end to the horrors in the East, even at the risk of causing a war. The Emperor places his utmost reliance in Your Majesty's friendship. (Pencil note in the margin: 'I read my report aloud to the

Emperor Alexander as far as this point, and I reproduce His Majesty's comments word for word.') I think that the Emperor desires above all some form of declaration to the effect that Russia possesses the sympathy of Germany in the Eastern Question, that the Armistice may be concluded as soon and for as long a period as possible, that the latter shall stand separate from the Peace negotiations, and that these shall not take place at Constantinople.

## II. 45

COUNT ZU STOLBERG, AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *September 13th, 1876*

*Secret.*

Count Andrassy visited me to-day. . . . He said to me that one point in the Reichstadt Agreement had not yet been communicated to the Imperial Government. This point concerns the extreme possibility of a solution of the Eastern Question, contemplating victory for the Christians and the complete collapse of Turkey. (BISMARCK: '*Not likely.*') On this basis Count Andrassy had proposed orally to the Russian Cabinet, without written confirmation, that when Turkey's position was ascertained to be no longer tenable, Bulgaria, Thessaly, etc., should be converted into autonomous states, dependent on no Great Power, that to Greece should be allotted such preponderatingly Greek territory as adjoins her frontiers, that a free State should be formed out of a suitable strip of territory next to Constantinople, (BISMARCK: '*So the Sultan is to be allowed to retain Constantinople!*') that Russia should become possessed of her 'natural frontiers', (BISMARCK: '*What are they? It is no affair of ours.*') and Austria of Bosnia by way of compensation. (BISMARCK: '*Without a doubt.*') Although Count Andrassy thinks the last provision very undesirable for his own country, he considers it essential in the event of a partitioning of European Turkey, because Austria-Hungary could not with safety to herself endure to have an autonomous Slav state directly adjoining her old disturbed borders or as hinterland to her narrow Dalmatian territory. This conditional proposal was accepted by the Emperor Alexander and Prince Gortchakoff, but the demand of Count Andrassy that the German Government should be made acquainted of this agreement was rejected by the Russian Imperial Chancellor, in spite of the Count's assurance that Your Highness would be in agreement with it and in spite of the Emperor's word that our own Imperial Master would find nothing to object to in it,—on the ground that, if so, the British Government were sure to be immediately informed of the proposal. (BISMARCK: '*England also would find something to say against the Austro-Bosnian project!*')

By his own account, Count Andrassy's conscience smote him with regard to this silence, which was settled and carried out against his wishes. (BISMARCK: '*Never mind.*') But now, considering the seriousness of the present situation, he considers it his duty to keep silence no longer. On the other hand, he entreats us not to make the slightest use of his avowal, when dealing with the Russian Cabinet. (BISMARCK: '*No wonder.*')

This news will not be altogether a surprise to Your Highness, for, apart from the confidential conversations which may have taken place in Berlin, I was enabled from various chance utterances of Count Andrassy's to form extensive deductions, on which I have several times reported.

To avoid any misunderstanding I beg to define Count Andrassy's position with regard to the Reichstadt agreements. First, as we know, he desires a peaceful solution of the troubles in the East; hence, on the assumption of a Turkish victory, there was agreement on restitution of the *status quo ante* in Servia, also the carrying out of the reforms required in the Note of December 30th of last year and agreed to by the Porte, and a return to the Berlin Memorandum. Only in the case of a victory by Servia and Montenegro, which would demonstrate the collapse of Turkey, did they arrive at the above mentioned agreement, which has not been communicated until now, and by means of which this Cabinet expects to be able to assure the best interests of Austria-Hungary against extreme and, in its opinion, most unwelcome possibilities.

[That Prince Bismarck's suspicions concerning an understanding between England and Russia were not altogether allayed by Field-Marshal von Manteuffel's report (September 6th) is shown by the following extract from a Memorandum by him, dated September 16th, 1876. Alluding to his mistrust of d'Oubril he said:]

To him I beg you merely to say that up to the present we have never rejected proposals made by Russia and that we are ready to peruse Prince Gortchakoff's programme in a friendly spirit, so far as it does not clash with such Anglo-Russian agreements as are acceptable to us. We particularly wish to avoid making any proposals of our own, as we must be careful not to cut into the Anglo-Russian negotiations and the support there may be for them in Vienna. Any proposals we may have to make in the future we should present through our Embassy in St. Petersburg to Prince Gortchakoff.

#### *German Note.*

On September 26th, 1876, Lieut.-General von Werder telegraphed from Livadia that the Emperor Alexander desired that the Powers should send war-ships to the Bosphorus, in order to break the resistance of the Porte against the conclusion of a genuine armistice.

## II. 60

MEMORANDUM OF PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 4th, 1876**Extract.*

As regards the participation by the German Fleet in some kind of a demonstration by sea, I trust that His Majesty is holding firmly to the intention, which he has already made known, of refusing to take part in any active naval demonstration, which is not both approved and supported by all the Powers, including England.

The naval forces of the rest of the Powers, which are now in the waters of the Levant, could make no effective demonstration without those of England. We have no apparent interest to justify us in mobilising our Sea forces in other parts. Supposing a naval demonstration on a war footing, in which Germany were participating, became in a short time the starting point of a hostile attitude on England's part, it might possibly be difficult for us to retire with dignity from a situation whose further development might lead to a break with England.

We shall have to meet these demands and others yet to come in an evasive and dilatory fashion, so as to present Count Gortchakoff with no opportunity of taking advantage of the Emperor's irritability or of arousing the distrust of either England or Austria.

[The question of bringing pressure to secure an armistice between Turkey and Servia in October, 1876, occasioned a difference of opinion between Austria, England and France on the one side and Russia on the other. Russia wished to force the issue with an armistice of only six weeks, whilst the rest held that Turkey's demand for one of six months was justified, in that the longer time was required to secure a proper settlement of the questions involved. Prince Bismarck viewed the matter only as it affected the relations of the Great Powers to each other.]

## II. 67

BÜLOW, FOREIGN SECRETARY, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*October 16th, 1876**Telegram.*

The Emperor is deeply disturbed by the disagreement of the Powers over the armistice question. He naturally awaits the views of the Imperial Chancellor, but is now questioning whether the uncompromising attitude of Russia does not call for an expression of views on our side concerning the period of the armistice, since the latter is merely the means to an end: namely, the introduction of negotiations for the peace, which Russia, as she declared, wishes to assure. I (Bülow) did my utmost, and for the moment with success, to persuade the Emperor to hold his hand.



But His Majesty's inclination is directly opposed to this and he considers that an immediate expression of opinion on our part is indicated and spoke again of the necessity for bringing pressure. Once again as before I succeeded in restraining His Majesty. The Emperor remarked that he had thought of writing privately and as a relation to the Emperor Alexander to explain to him that the present Russian policy, if persisted in, would drive Europe into war. I expressed the hope that His Majesty would not take so important a step without the concurrence of the Imperial Chancellor. The above indicates the point of view of His Majesty and limits of my own responsibility in the matter.

## II. 67-8

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, *October 16th, 1876*

*Telegram.*

I should be unable to carry on the business *from the moment* when I was convinced that I no longer enjoyed the support of His Majesty in the policy, which I consider myself bound to recommend, at a moment so critical for the future of our foreign relations.

I beg Herr Geheimer Rath von Bülow to telegraph the above in answer to his (preceding) one, with the recommendation to make use of it only in case of need, not otherwise, and to add that I am absolutely determined to resign my office, if at any time His Majesty places me in a position of responsibility for steps, which, in my opinion, quite unnecessarily menace the national security.

## II. 68

BÜLOW TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 17th, 1876*

*Telegram.*

His Majesty is in complete agreement with the Imperial Chancellor's views regarding the armistice question. On the basis of the proposals to be hereafter promulgated by us in Vienna and London His Majesty hopes for an agreement between the Powers. . . .

*German Note.*

. . . The British Government seemed to have renounced the expectation of any agreement upon an armistice or of the maintenance of peace in Europe. This anxiety caused Lord Odo Russell to enquire of Bülow (who reported it to Prince Bismarck on October 20th by telegram) whether the Prince would not or could not suggest any other solution in the interests of peace, since the idea of a Congress or Conference appeared not to appeal to him.

## II. 69

MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 20th, 1876**Extract.*

The telegram just received offers no opening for any expression of opinion on the Armistice question, since England regards that question as closed. Now Lord Odo Russell asks whether I have any suggestion to make in the interests of peace. In any case this is no business of ours, since not one of the concessions, on which an agreement between the Powers depends, is to our liking. In my opinion it is an error, and probably a deliberate one, to suppose, as apparently it is supposed in various quarters, that the wisdom of statesmen can discover a magic recipe for the maintenance of peace; whereas peace can in fact be assured only if one or more of the interested Powers will make concessions to each other, by lowering their demands or discarding their mutual suspicions. If neither will consent to this, I do not believe that human wisdom can evolve a scheme to prevent the competing forces from eventually clashing together. Any proposals that we might put forward could only lead to success, either if Turkey were willing to make concessions regarding the future of the Christians, or if Russia would renounce her intentions of showing practical sympathy with the Turkish Christians in the way that she has hitherto announced, or if England would declare her readiness to leave Russia free to select some definite and specified frontier or even to support her. In any of these cases the proposing Power will be forced to exercise a certain amount of pressure on the Power which is to cede some point. Successful pressure, even if exercised in the friendliest possible form, is bound always to influence disadvantageously our relations with the Power, against which we may have exercised it. . . . If I knew of a plan, which I believed likely to find a welcoming echo in London, St. Petersburg and Vienna, I should have brought it forward already; but I know of none. . . .

I believe that the present tension would never have happened, if England had come into line at the time with the other five Powers on the basis of the Berlin Conversations (May 20th, 1876). A second time, indeed, the six Powers did arrive at an agreement, and that on the basis of a proposal originating in England. It was settled by a joint-agreement and in this form was submitted to the Porte. [This refers to a proposal of a six-weeks armistice, made to Turkey in the first half of October.] Now, if the Porte had returned an evasive answer quite beside the point, but having an appearance of formal agreement, I should have expected that no one of the six Powers would agree separately with these entirely fresh proposals of the Porte, but that a fresh consultation

by the combined Powers would proceed to deal with the Turkish reply. Now, however, not only has the combined proposal of the Powers been allowed forthwith to fall to the ground on receipt of the Turkish reply, but certain of the then united Powers have accepted the Turkish propositions, which are widely divergent from those originally agreed upon. I can claim no right to criticise, for each Great Power can do no more than consult its own interests.

*German Note.*

. . . The Powers had agreed to demand an armistice of six weeks, but on October 12th, 1876, Turkey refused to consider less than six months. Austria, England and France hastened to accept the Turkish proposal of an armistice lasting until March 15th, 1877, whilst Russia withheld her agreement absolutely. Thus Germany was faced with the difficulty of deciding which side to support.

But a non-participating Power finds in such proceedings but little encouragement to attempt to bring about a fresh union of the participants. Success in the attempt, even, would offer no assurance that it would not be shattered at the first sign of an objection by the Porte or of reluctance on the part of some diplomatic agent at Constantinople.

As to the confidential conversations that I have had in the past with Lord Odo Russell, there have been many such, and I do not know to which of them is referred. In the present crisis I hardly dare let any of them come before Lord Derby in the form of 'advice'. I am merely writing down for Your Excellency's information in confidence certain conclusions, which arise of themselves from my general comprehension of affairs in the East.

All Turkey, in which I include the various races inhabiting it, is not so valuable a political institution, as to justify the civilised peoples of Europe in ruining themselves and each other in a great war for her sake. Sympathy for the fate of those countries and their inhabitants does not in the sight of any Government weigh so heavily as the anxiety regarding the complications, which would take the place of present conditions, and their reactions on the safety and power of those European nations, which are directly interested in the question. It seems that Austria is correct in being guided by this consideration and in her determination to remain at peace with Russia in the event of a Russo-Turkish war, and to draw a frontier line for herself inside the Turkish province by means of an occupation in the guise of a pledge, a line behind which the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy can safely await developments. Though Count Andrassy may count this course as a *plus aller*, it is a far lesser evil in comparison with a war on a large scale between Austria and Russia. If I had to give advice on British policy, I should suggest analogous action with regard to

England's weak spot, namely the Suez Canal and Egypt, and as regards Constantinople, that she should come to an understanding with Russia on the basis of the continuance of Turkish rule there and at Adrianople with their surrounding districts, which are, as I believe, inhabited mostly by Turks. If the Sultan remains in possession of Asia Minor and Constantinople and its neighbourhood, he will be stronger than ever was the Empire of Byzantium in the last centuries of its existence, and meanwhile the Dardanelles remain in neutral hands. Russian utterances have so far revealed no plan of establishing herself firmly in Bulgaria, but at most only of setting up autonomous states there and of recovering the part of Bessarabia, which she gave up twenty years ago. Those are anxieties for the future. For the present my opinion is that, if a monarch so peaceable as the Emperor Alexander is forced by difficulties at home to take up the cause of the Christians in Turkey, England should seek compensation not by war with Russia, but by acquiring Suez and Alexandria. Thus, albeit at the expense of Turkey, the peace of Europe would be preserved. If the British Government fears that such a course might arouse French hostility, she might enquire whether an understanding with this Power is not possible, on the lines of a sphere of operations in Egypt and Syria, shared by both these Western Powers. A very accessible point of departure might be found in France's yearning for prestige, based on her past history in connection with these countries, and in any common overseas enterprise the preponderance would in the long run fall to the stronger Seapower of the two, just because England can bring her forces to bear from both sides of the Suez Canal and is also more skilful than the French in the management of Oriental peoples.

This may be but a fanciful picture, but if I had the management of the affair, I should certainly try to maintain the peace between the European Powers; it is, moreover, so essential, that it should be at the expense of Turkey whose present-day situation holds no promise of any stability.

A rapprochement between England and France would not be disadvantageous to our interests or for the balance of power in Europe. On the contrary. . . .

[From the above Memorandum it is clear that Prince Bismarck desired above all things to prevent Great Britain from taking an active part in the conflict between Turkey and Russia, which appeared inevitable. It was well known to him that the road to India would in British eyes become insecure, supposing Russia took possession of Constantinople, and he hoped that the undisturbed possession of Egypt would reconcile Great Britain to such an arrangement, supposing it were unavoidable.]

*German Note.*

General von Werder who had been commissioned to sound the Emperor Alexander regarding his intentions, sent a report dated October 8th, 1876,

which included the declared resolution of the Emperor Alexander to make war, if the Turks continued obstinate and the projected Conference produced no result. In this connection von Werder reported further: 'His Majesty hopes that the war will be localised, and that no Power will enter the lists against him . . . that Your Majesty (the Emperor William), who knows the intentions and thoughts of the Emperor Alexander better than anyone, will approve and support to the utmost all the steps that he is taking, the Emperor has not a moment's doubt' . . . Another part of the report repeats incidentally a doubt expressed by the Emperor Alexander as to whether England would remain quiet in the event of an outbreak of war. 'The Emperor trusts that in that case Your Majesty will exert all Your influence to dissuade England from taking up an hostile attitude to Russia. It would greatly gratify the Emperor, if Your Majesty would be willing to confirm this in some manner.'

## II. 77

BULOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO SCHWEINITZ, AMBASSADOR IN  
ST. PETERSBURG, *October 23rd, 1876*

### *Extract.*

We can obviously not consent in advance to support steps, of which we know nothing. They must first be clearly defined and communicated to us. . . .

As regards England, our attitude in the most recent phase of the Armistice question proves the pains that we have taken to smooth over any misunderstandings there may have been between the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and London, and it will be entirely in consonance with our Imperial Master's feelings of friendship and his love of peace to make use of Germany's influence, in order to stave off a rupture between two Governments so closely united by friendship to Germany, and as far as is possible, to dissuade England against any hostile action towards Russia.

There is no need to explain at length why we cannot conceive the possibility of making war on England for the sake of Russia. There would be no practical object to be gained even in using it as a threat, for Russia's land frontiers on our side would be protected by the fact of our neutrality, and if it were admissible that Germany, purely out of sympathy for Russia, might declare war against England, it would react to the disadvantage of Russia, since the harbours of Memel, Stettin and Emden would be blockaded, and the unquestionably superior land-forces of Russia could not be reinforced by the German land-power. On these grounds also the Emperor Alexander must clearly have in his mind only friendly representations, to which, as I mentioned above, we can heartily agree. . . .

Supposing, as events further develop, it should occur to England independently to require Egypt as a pledge, after the example of Austria in Bosnia, in the event of a Russian advance into Turkey, it is Prince Bismarck's opinion that, in the interests

of peace, Russia should meet England's wishes on this point, and it would be correct for us to support it. But supposing there came to pass negotiations between Russia and England to discuss a delimitation of the sphere, within which Russia should conduct her operations, and which should exclude an advance in the direction of Constantinople, we should decline to involve ourselves in so difficult a problem. I beg Your Excellency to treat these last observations as meant merely for your own personal guidance.

## II. 82

[On November 2nd, 1876, Schweinitz reported that the Emperor Alexander had read to him a letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph, in which, amongst other matter, the Austrian Emperor agreed to a secret Treaty, proposed by Russia. This Treaty promised that the Russian Army should be supplied from Austro-Hungarian territory in case of war and discussed the limitation of spheres of occupation, and also of the territory to be acquired by Austria-Hungary. It continues :]

SCHWEINITZ, IN ST. PETERSBURG, TO BÜLOW, AT JALTA, *November 2nd, 1876*

### *Extract.*

The Austrian monarch's letter hints in the friendliest form at several reservations founded on the necessity of considering his own peoples, expresses regret that no co-operation is possible and makes active intervention dependent on the preliminary condition 'que le reste de l'Europe soit, comme nous, persuadé de l'impossibilité du maintien de la domination ottomane.' (BISMARCK : '*And England ?*'—'*So be it ; what does it matter to us ?*')

The general impression is not one of unqualified confidence, but anxiety is allayed for the moment. . . .

Whilst the Emperor Alexander feels now no anxiety concerning Austria, he is apprehensive of extreme measures on the part of England. The despatch of the Fleet, the seizure of Constantinople, and a lengthened occupation of the Straits are, in his opinion, to be expected from Lord Beaconsfield. (BISMARCK : '*We cannot prevent this.*') His Majesty then spoke of the unfounded distrust of the English, who always ascribed to him '*des convoitises*' about Constantinople. He declared with heat that neither he nor his late Father had ever harboured any such idea. He had a right to demand the same trust in himself, as his Father had proved justified in 1829. (BISMARCK : '*And 1853 ?*')

Although His Majesty was exposing his inmost thoughts to

Lord Augustus Loftus (British Ambassador). He had told the Ambassador that there was not the least reason for a break with England, if only the English could exorcise the three bogies by which they were haunted, namely, the so-called Will of Peter the Great, the conquest of India and the Russian plot regarding Constantinople. 'Il faudrait être fou, pour penser à une marche aux Indes à travers ces chaînes de montagnes.' Regarding Constantinople he had recently given a striking proof of his good faith, by himself proposing the bringing up of the Fleet. (BISMARCK: '*Quite a useful argument.*')

Both yesterday and to-day the Emperor never tired of discussing this subject, which he justly regards as the decisive one. He deplores not without bitterness the unconquerable suspicion, which he meets with, and he considers the maintenance of peace to be dependent on its being overcome. (BISMARCK: '*As always in all cases.*') I confined myself to replying as shortly as courtesy demanded, but I could not help assuring him that no one, even in England, distrusted his word, but that there was some genuine anxiety, lest Russian national sentiment and a possibly imaginary current of tradition should sweep the nation in the direction of Constantinople. . . .

[On November 2nd, 1876, Alexander II wrote to William I, and in the postscript announced that the Turks had accepted an armistice of two months, which Russia had demanded on October 30th.]

## II. 89

MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 9th, 1876*

*Extract.*

The Emperor Alexander has, as he says and Gortchakoff confirms, come to an understanding with the Emperor Francis Joseph. The question of what we are to do, if this understanding proves inadequate, is therefore at present not put to us, and is not our responsibility. So far the wish expressed in the Imperial letter is merely that we should use Germany's influence 'pour désarmer les méfiances, contenir les hostilités', and that His Majesty 'se porte garant du désintéressement' of the Emperor Alexander. . . . This claim made in the Emperor's letter can only be meant, and we must in any case so interpret it as meaning that our Imperial Master will declare his conviction of the Emperor Alexander's altruism and will add the recommendation 'qu'on le laisse agir'. Our Emperor would thus but be telling the truth, as he doubtless is ready to trust the assurances of the Emperor Alexander; and moreover, nothing prejudicial to our interests will have been said, for if the Emperor Alexander makes war on Turkey, it will do no harm to us, and if he is allowed to act without

interference, it is to the advantage of the general peace. We cannot help it if our assurances concerning the Emperor's altruism are disbelieved in England, but our expressing in London our trust in the honesty of such assurances cannot reasonably do harm to our relations with England. But I am convinced that it is the only course we can adopt at present, in order to guard against an extension of the war between Russia and Turkey, which appears to be unavoidable.

## II. 95

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *November 10th, 1876*

*Extract.*

In my opinion we must arrange our replies (to communications from other Powers), so that no misuse of them can be made in Vienna and London, and particularly so that Prince Gortchakoff cannot use them to make us responsible in the eyes of the Russian nation and its Emperor for the failure of his own faulty policy. . . . As regards the audience of Schweinitz with the Emperor of November 2nd, I believe we should answer strictly according to form, so that Schweinitz may be able to mention it, when he sees the Emperor. He can then once more give assurance that in any case our attitude will be similar to that of Russia in 1870 (i.e. no Treaty), and further that we are gratified at the peaceful intentions of Russia towards Austria, grateful for the communications and ready to offer our services at Vienna; that we still hold as firmly as ever to the Three Emperor Treaty, and will act as far as in us lies, so as to minimise the British mistrust. To this end we will make the most of the striking fact that it was Russia herself who proposed the despatch of the Fleet into the Straits; and we will use our utmost influence to deter England from coming to any fateful decisions. It is better to avoid further reference to the grievance concerning our expression of regret in London, for it could hardly be done without unpleasantness regarding this thankless act of officiousness.

*German Note.*

The regret expressed by Count Münster in London at Russia's refusal of the six months Armistice is meant.

Above all, I now repeat my urgent request that His Majesty the Emperor will not, through his noble-minded anxiety for the peace of others, be led into risking our own peace—yes—our own security. It is quite possible that we may be able to induce Russia to remain at peace with Turkey, but only at some sacrifice to ourselves, and by paving the way to a coalition directed against us under Russia's leadership. . . .



[Prince Bismarck then referred to his telegram to Bulow of October 16th, 1876.]

I have, moreover, no doubt that England could ensure peace, as well as we could, if she threatened Russia with war in the event of Russia's attacking Turkey, and England's interests give her a possible pretext, and in any case the natural right to do so. We, however, have neither of these.

#### CIRCULAR NOTE

Foreign Office, *November 4th, 1876.*<sup>1</sup>

Her Majesty's Government believe, from the communications which they have received from the Powers, that there is a general feeling, that the only solution of the questions arising out of recent events in Turkey is to be found in a Conference, but that there is some hesitation felt in formally proposing it. Under these circumstances and with the view of bringing about a satisfactory settlement of these questions, Her Majesty's Government have determined to renew the suggestion made by them on the 5th ultimo, and to take the initiative in proposing, that a Conference should be held forthwith at Constantinople, in which all the Guaranteeing Powers should take part, and each Government should be at liberty to appoint two Plenipotentiaries to represent it.

Her Majesty's Government further submit as the basis for the deliberations of the Conference:

1. The independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

2. A declaration that the Powers do not intend to seek for, and will not seek for, any territorial advantages, any exclusive influence, or any concession with regard to the commerce of their subjects, which those of every other nation may not equally obtain. This declaration was made on September 17th, 1840, in the Protocol for the pacification of the Levant, and again, August 3rd, 1860, in regard to the pacification of Syria.

3. The bases of pacification proposed to the Porte on the 21st of September, viz.: (a) The status quo, speaking roughly, both as regards Serbia and Montenegro. (b) That the Porte should simultaneously undertake, in a Protocol to be signed at Constantinople with the Representatives of the Mediating Powers, to grant to Bosnia and Herzegovina a system of local or administrative autonomy, by which is to be understood a system of local institutions which shall give the population some control over their own local affairs and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority.

There is no question of the creation of a tributary state.

<sup>1</sup>The text of this is not printed in the German work; it is taken from *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. 67, p. 293.

Guarantees of a similar kind also to be provided against maladministration in Bulgaria. The reforms already agreed to by the Porte in the Note addressed to the Representatives of the Powers on the 13th of February last, to be included in the administrative arrangements for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and so far as they may be applicable for Bulgaria.

Her Majesty's Government desire that Your Excellency should propose to the Government to which you are accredited a Conference on these bases, and you may state that if this proposal meets with general acceptance, Her Majesty's Government will lose no time in appointing a special Ambassador to proceed to Constantinople to take part in the Conference.

If other Powers thought it advisable, Her Majesty Government would not object to their Plenipotentiaries joining in preliminary discussions with those of the other five Guaranteeing Powers before the opening of the Conference. These discussions to be on the same bases as those proposed for the Conference.

## II. 100

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO FRIEDRICH VON WERTHER,  
AMBASSADOR AT CONSTANTINOPLE, *November 18th, 1876*

*Very confidential.*

My telegram of November 14th will have informed you that we have accepted the basis proposed by the British Government for Peace Negotiations at Constantinople. In accordance with it you are empowered to take part in the Conversations, which should shortly take place there. We have not thought it necessary to grant you a special commission for this purpose, as we do not consider the impending negotiations in the light of a formal European Conference, and so far as we know here, the other Governments share this view. . . .

*German Note.*

Lord Salisbury, who was appointed British Plenipotentiary for the Constantinople Conference, visited Berlin on his journey thither. On November 23rd, 1876, a conference took place between him and Prince Bismarck.

## II. 103

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO SCHWEINITZ, IN ST. PETERSBURG,  
*November 26th, 1876*

*Very confidential.*

Your Excellency has been made aware by all communications from here and by those received here from General von Werder that our Imperial Master unswervingly continues his adherence to the policy dictated by his friendship with the Emperor Alexander

and his respect for German interests. Whilst this policy corresponds with the friendly relations of Germany towards Russia, we are convinced that it is the only one by which we can be really useful to Russia in the present crisis and can work with success against the outbreak of a general European war. The conversations between the Chancellor and the Marquis of Salisbury have been held in this sense.

As the holding of this attitude already presents sufficient intrinsic difficulties, Your Excellency will not be surprised that, as the crisis comes to a head, these are considerably increased. The conditions and relationships of our Court are such that it has been possible for various anti-Russian influences to be set in motion from England and persevered in. The Imperial Chancellor has found that even highly placed correspondence and intimate influences have failed to induce the Emperor to take steps involving any at all marked partisanship against Russia, and with this fact before him the Chancellor desires to point out that this steadfast attitude has been maintained not without difficulties, and is therefore much to the credit of our Imperial Master. This is especially the case as influences, which easily find a good opportunity during daily intercourse, and are able to appeal to the friendship of the Emperor and his love of peace, owe their failure to his appreciation of this friendship and to our attitude towards Russia. It will be well for you to mention incidentally at Court that His Majesty has shown himself proof against British influence.

*German Note.*

Cf. Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst's *Memoirs*, Vol. II, 1907, p. 198 (August 2nd, 1876). 'I observed from the Records, which I read at Bülow's, that the Chancellor holds fast by the Three Emperor Treaty and warns the Emperor William against being induced by England to do anything calculated to weaken the Treaty. The Empress Augusta and Queen Victoria have used pressure upon the Emperor, in the hope of bending his will. It appears that Augusta now is afraid of the British Fleet and imagines the war feeling in England to be genuine.'

II. 105-6

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON,  
*November 27th, 1876*

*Secret.*

The Chancellor has received your Report of November 20th (announcing Lord Salisbury's journey to Berlin) and is grateful to you for the information concerning Lord Salisbury contained in this and former Reports. He finds that personal acquaintance with this English statesman confirms your words with regard to him. He is impressed by his agreeable and trust-inspiring

personality and considers him to be both a shrewd and careful politician.

In conversation with Lord Salisbury the Chancellor first mentioned that Germany had but little personal interest in the fate of Turkey, but a very great one in her own enduring friendship with England, Russia and Austria. This standpoint outweighed any cares regarding our relations towards Turkey. The object touching German policy most nearly was to get over the present crisis, without disturbing the existing good relations with these our friends. We should not willingly abandon the friendship of any one of them, unless she required us, for her sake, to become hostile to the other, without ourselves possessing any compelling reason for such a course. It would be asking us to act as mercenaries, in a manner of speaking.

Lord Salisbury showed thorough comprehension of Germany's general point of view and declared himself in entire sympathy with it.

During this conversation Prince Bismarck took the greatest pains to impress upon the British statesman that England should not rush hastily into a war. Should the Queen's Government consider an appeal to arms unavoidable, let this terrible decision be delayed till the latest moment and then only after trying to prevent war by every means possible.

In support of this idea the Prince had, in consideration for the eventualities, which must be taken into account, imagined an ascending series of efforts for the maintenance of peace.

The first object that he suggested was that peace should be maintained between Russia and Turkey, and the present difficulties be settled by the Conference.

To Lord Salisbury's question—whether the Prince believed in the success of the Conference—the answer was that he had many doubts regarding it and thought it best to make no concealment of them, so as not to give rise to the feeling that, if Conferences failed, all was lost.

In the event of the Conference failing, the second step lay before them: the probability of a Russian advance into Turkey, that is war between the two Powers. Even so, the peace of Europe need not necessarily be disturbed. If he were asked whether England would be forced to declare war immediately on Russia, he neither hoped it nor believed it. After the Emperor Alexander's formal assurances regarding Constantinople, there was no room for doubt that he would keep his word. . . . Without the Fleet, the road from the Pruth to the Bosphorus in winter was a long one and would allow a hundred times the time necessary for a war decision. He would warn England against undue haste.

Lord Salisbury's objection to this view was that, once the Russians had crossed the Balkans, they would be practically in Constantinople, and once there, they would never leave it. Prince Bismarck answered that we should at least wait until the Russian Army had got over the Balkans,—no very easy task ;—moreover, even when over, they were by no means in Constantinople. He recalled to mind the campaign of 1828, in which Diebitsch was forced to remain at Adrianople and far from conquering Constantinople, thankfully welcomed the mediation of Prussia through General von Müffling. There would then be still time for the intervention of England,—not even then, however, necessarily in a warlike sense, but in the sense of taking some possession of Turkey, more or less as a pledge, to an amount corresponding with the successes of the Russians. . . . Thus, England (following the example of Austria in Bosnia) might well take action, without going to war with Russia, by entering into possession of Egypt, or if this, as Lord Salisbury suggested, was too difficult to undertake and, moreover, would not cover Constantinople, why not Constantinople itself? In this case Russia would occupy Bulgaria, Austria Bosnia and England Constantinople. In such a case the resistance of Turkey would be broken, and very probably the three Powers would be able to come to an understanding.

It was also ever necessary to consider whether, when it actually came to an invasion, the Russian Army might not meet with greater obstacles than they had expected, arising out of the Turkish resistance, the time of year and the widening of their basis of operations. In such an event it might be a question whether England, instead of being hostile to Russia, would not do better by approaching her with friendly and propitiatory proposals. Prince Bismarck considered this as the third step to be taken before the war.

Lord Salisbury met these last expressions by silence, and Prince Bismarck made a further special effort to wean him from his mistrust of Russia and the Emperor Alexander. He remarked that in England they believed too much, and in his opinion wrongly, in a cut and dried plan of Russia's, which she was pursuing relentlessly and cold-bloodedly.

The above are the main points discussed in the conversations between the Chancellor and Lord Salisbury, and I respectfully beg you to use them, when a suitable opportunity arises, with Lord Derby, but with him alone.

The following remarks are for your personal information.

We observe the present complications in the East, and the prospect of consequences arising from them, entirely from a German point of view. . . . The most unpleasant possibility of all, —which we happily consider unlikely—would be a war between

Russia and Austria, especially if the latter were invaded. This would produce consequences, which a war between Russia and England would not necessarily bring about. These two Powers cannot deal each other mortal blows. They can hinder each other's schemes and prevent the carrying out of particular objects, but not kill each other. Seen from this standpoint there is no absolute need for us to prevent such a war; whereas, since a Russo-Austrian war involves danger for us, we are forced to do our utmost first and foremost to stop it by one means or another.

### CHAPTER III

## THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONFERENCE, THE LONDON PROTOCOL, AND THE RUSSO- TURKISH WAR OF 1877

#### *German Note.*

The mobilisation of the Russian Army against Turkey was well under way, whilst negotiations by a Conference of the Great Powers were taking place at Constantinople, having been preceded by a preliminary discussion, lasting from December 11th to 22nd, to which the representatives of Turkey were not admitted. The object of this preliminary conference was to bring about an understanding between the representatives of the Great Powers regarding the proposals to be laid before the Porte for the settlement of the troubles in the Balkans, for 'a disunited Europe would come up against Turkish resistance from the very start'. At the Conference itself, which lasted under the presidency of Salvet Pacha, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, from December 23rd, 1876, till January 20th, 1877, the proposals of the preliminary conference were considerably weakened owing to far-reaching objections raised by General Ignatieff, the Russian Plenipotentiary. Notwithstanding the Powers' unity of purpose, the Sultan, supported by a decision of the Grand Council, on January 18th, 1877, rejected the proposals submitted by Lord Salisbury in the name of the Plenipotentiaries on January 15th. The Porte, encouraged by Lord Beaconsfield's Turkophil attitude, which did not coincide with Lord Salisbury's one of hostility to Turkey, conceived the hope that England would support it in the last resort. The Conference dissolved on January 20th with the question still unsettled.<sup>1</sup>

#### II. 120

COUNT MÜNSTER, AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, GERMAN  
FOREIGN SECRETARY, *December 20th, 1876*

The centre of gravity of Lord Salisbury's instructions is to be found in the last sentence of all, which reads :

'Should the Turkish Government reject these proposals, the British Government will reserve to itself entire liberty as regards its policy.'

On this is based Lord Derby's reply to the question put to him by my Austrian and Russian colleagues, whether England intended to advise Turkey to accept or would bring pressure to

<sup>1</sup> See *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. 68.

bear on her. He declared very decisively that the British Government intended to allow the Porte an absolutely free hand, and that of pressure of any sort there was no question.

(The EMPEROR WILLIAM: '*This means that it won't stop the war!*')

At the close of our conversation Lord Derby said to me, he had now little hope that the Conferences would lead to any practical result, or that war would be avoided; but that he had given his agreement, in order to make a bridge for the Russians who at the moment really seemed more favourable to peace;—a bridge, which England does not mean to prevent Turkey from destroying. (The EMPEROR WILLIAM: '*?*') .

## II. 121

PRINCE HOHENLOHE, AMBASSADOR IN PARIS, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *January 6th, 1877*

*Confidential.*

Reports from Constantinople ascribe the obstinacy of the Turkish Government regarding the Conference proposals to the circumstance that the Turkish Ministers are fully informed of the difference of opinion, which exists between the Marquis of Salisbury and Sir Henry Elliot (British Ambassador and Second Plenipotentiary). According to a private letter addressed to the Vicomte d'Harcourt (French Ambassador in London), Sir Henry Elliot makes no concealment of his views, jokes about the fruitless efforts of the Conference and is encouraging the Turks in their resistance. In this he echoes the sympathies of the Queen and Lord Beaconsfield, whereas Lord Salisbury shares Lord Derby's views and leans more towards concessions to Russia. This lack of unity in the heart of the British Government is taken by the Turks as an assurance that in the event of war England will not leave them in the lurch.

## II. 122

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO SCHWEINITZ, IN ST. PETERSBURG,  
*January 13th, 1877*

*Extract.*

We have constantly, both by word and deed, shown that Germany of her own initiative makes use of her strength and her prestige solely for such political enterprises as she both can and will carry through, if need be, with her whole energy. Our actions in the domain of Eastern politics, which for us, and indeed in themselves, are of indirect interest, have been prompted by our anxiety to oblige our friends politically, and Russia in particular. We took part in the Conferences in order to further,



as far as we were able, the friendly understanding between the Powers nearest to us, and to ward off any complications, which might arise amongst them.

In this sense last year we sought to prevent the continued isolation of Russia over the question of the five months Armistice. . . .

## II. 123

FREIHERR VON WERTHER, IN CONSTANTINOPLE, TO BÜLOW,  
*January 14th, 1877*

Your Excellency will have learnt from my report the attitude taken up by Lord Salisbury regarding the Conference discussions. In private conversation the British Minister's mistrust of the Turkish promises of reform and his condemnation of the general condition of the country have come to the front much more emphatically than in those utterances which I described in it. Since his opinions will certainly not fail to influence the future decisions of the London Cabinet, I beg to set down a few characteristic remarks of his, as follows :—

For the Turkish Ministers Lord Salisbury merely expresses utter contempt. He considers them incapable of conducting any serious negotiation whatever, and has gained the conviction from his conversations with Midhat Pacha that he is shifty and inspired by extreme ill will, and that his one object is to slip, by means of base and petty tricks, out of any agreement which may make for a genuine improvement of the Turkish administration. He doubts whether, even if the intentions of the rulers of Turkey were more honest than they are, the universal corruption of the governing classes would permit the establishment of stable conditions in the Turkish provinces. Even if the Conference were to succeed in tiding the Porte over the present crisis by some temporary measure, it is still to be feared that a few years of misgovernment will produce complications similar to the present ones. But if Turkey is, as is becoming more abundantly clear, no longer able to avoid periodically disturbing the peace of Europe, the question will arise, whether Turkey can show any further claim to European support in future. In former times the Turkish régime was held in strict tutelage, exercised by turns in Constantinople by one or other of the Great Powers. Nevertheless, a domination, such as that of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, is no longer a possibility,—at least, if conflicts and bloodshed are to be avoided. In England, unfortunately, there is much of the traditional misconception of the importance of Turkey to British interests. The nation appears to demand some kind of a bogey. Formerly it was the

Pope that filled their minds, now it is Russophobia, and it is no easy task to drive out these prejudices offhand. He, Lord Salisbury, does not share the view that Constantinople is the gate of India, but believes rather that the natural frontiers of the Indian Empire form a truer protection against invasion by Russia than any political combination.

Lord Salisbury has spoken his mind openly to the Sultan himself . . . and has reminded him that as a constitutional Sovereign he can dispose of the posts in his Ministry. The insinuation was directed at Midhat Pacha, . . . an utterance concerning his protégé, which Sir Henry Elliot must have listened to in silence and depression.

[Throughout this period there was a constant argument proceeding between the Russians and Prince Bismarck on the subject of the solidarity of Europe as a whole.

In a letter dated November 2nd, 1876, Prince Gortchakoff had urged that the Eastern Question 'qu'il s'agit de résoudre n'est ni allemande, ni russe.'<sup>1</sup> Elle est Européenne.'

PRINCE BISMARCK made marginal remarks, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> 'Elle est russe.' \* 'It is incorrect to talk of "Europe." It is a geographical idea.'

This contention was argued several times between the two Powers.]  
*German Note.*

Finally on January 17th, 1877, Schweinitz reported that the Emperor Alexander had complained with bitterness about the want of support offered to Russia by Germany at the Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople. In a private letter to Bismarck (January 18th) Schweinitz begged for some directions to guide him, in case he should be subjected to such 'scenes' again.

## II. 128

PRINCE BISMARCK TO SCHWEINITZ, IN ST. PETERSBURG,  
*January 24th, 1877*

*Extract.*

Throughout the Conference Russia has never honoured us with full and timely information regarding her intentions. Advantage has been taken of the lack of insight of our representative in Constantinople in order to prevent enquiries from Berlin. Negotiations have been carried on with England (which is explicable), nay, even with France and Italy with fuller confidence than with us, and our principal information of what Russia desired at the Conference and of the kind of co-operation she expected from us, has come to us mainly through London, sometimes through Rome and very occasionally through Vienna, and we have not been certain of its authenticity. Under such circumstances how can there be complaints that Baron Werther was not regularly

instructed? It is a most reasonable claim for a Great Power, enjoying equal rights, to make—to know to what it is expected to subscribe. . . .

I have set down for you, my honoured friend, thus fully my point of view in strictest confidence, in order to convince you that I share and understand your justifiable annoyance at the presumption of Russia. Nevertheless I think it most essential for you not to make Prince Gortchakoff's game against us any the easier by any betrayal of these feelings. I ascribe the Emperor's anger against us to the Prince and his obvious need to cover up the mistakes in his own policy, and I beg you, if similar expressions are repeated, to meet them with the calm demeanour, which one assumes towards a fit of bad temper in a highly placed and personally honoured friend. . . .

*German Note.*

On January 18th, 1877, the Turkish Grand Council, numbering over 200 members, declared itself unanimously against the proposals of the Powers. On January 20th Safvet Pacha communicated the adverse Resolution to the Conference.

II. 133

PRINCE HOHENLOHE, AMBASSADOR IN PARIS, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *February 4th, 1877*

I am informed on good authority that Odian Effendi's mission to London was undertaken, in order that he might learn orally from Lord Derby, what England's intentions are in the event of rejection of the Conference proposals. In this conversation Lord Derby is said to have reassured Odian Effendi and convinced him that the British Government would limit itself to a bare expression of regret at the Porte's refusal. On the evening before the final settlement Odian Effendi telegraphed this to Constantinople, and the Porte based its decision, as now known to us, on Lord Derby's reply. . . .

II. 134

THE LONDON PROTOCOL

*German Note.*

At the end of February, 1877, General Ignatieff, Russian Plenipotentiary at the Constantinople Conference, was sent by Prince Gortchakoff on an Extraordinary Mission. This Mission was welcomed neither by Lord Salisbury nor by Count Shouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador in London. General Ignatieff travelled through Berlin (March 4th) to Paris (8th), in order to meet Count Shouvaloff there. Whilst there, the General invited himself, without Count Shouvaloff's knowledge, to stay with Lord Salisbury at Hatfield, his country seat, and arrived in London on March 16th. There he was, however, not invited to take part in the diplomatic negotiations, of which Count Shouvaloff was in charge. The General left London on March 22nd, and on his return journey through Paris and

Vienna came once again to Berlin on March 28th, where he had a second conversation with Prince Bismarck.

## II. 135

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE EMPEROR WILLIAM, *March 4th, 1877*

*Extract.*

The proposal is made—and this seems to be the chief object of the Mission—to make a combined declaration to the Porte with the agreement of all six Powers. I shall be able to submit a copy of this declaration to Your Majesty to-morrow. . . .

. . . My final impression derived from this long and complicated interview (with General Ignatieff) is that Russia, in spite of her assurance of preference for a peaceful solution, will strike and will hardly wait for the proposed draft to be generally accepted. . . .

## II. 136

PRINCE BISMARCK TO SCHWEINITZ IN ST. PETERSBURG,  
*March 5th, 1877*

General Ignatieff laid before me the draft of a protocol with oral comments. Since its submission to His Majesty, I am glad to announce to you that the Emperor has declared himself in agreement with the scheme and authorises me to communicate this fact to London and Vienna.

## II. 138

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN  
OFFICE, *March 13th, 1877*

*Telegram.*

The Cabinet to-day decided to enter into discussion of the Russian Protocol proposal, with the proviso that the Russian Cabinet gives assurances of immediate demobilisation. Lord Derby communicated to me the alterations, which he had indicated provisionally to Count Shouvaloff. . . .

He would replace the words 'les puissances se réservent le droit de surveiller d'une manière efficace par l'intermédiaire de leurs représentants' by 'les puissances se réservent le droit que leurs représentants à Constantinople et leurs agents locaux veillent à ce que les promesses du Gouvernement ottoman soient exécutées'. There were objections to the word 'surveiller'. The proposed form of the conclusion is not liked here, and in particular the words 'déclaration qu'il leur serait impossible de tolérer plus longtemps', also 'd'aviser en commun à l'action qu'elles jugeront indispensable'. Lord Derby's alternative sug-

gestion is 'démarches nécessaires'. Count Shouvaloff has taken these proposals ad referendum.

Lord Derby declared to me and my colleagues that the assurance regarding demobilisation must be made binding, but that nothing smacking of coercion must appear in the Protocol.

*German Note.*

The draft of the Protocol, as submitted by General Ignatioff in London, not having met with the approval of the British Government, owing to the unwillingness of Russia to agree to demobilise her forces, Count Shouvaloff, without previously consulting St. Petersburg, drew up a fresh draft, which was accepted and signed by the British Cabinet on March 31st.

[Before the Protocol was finally accepted and signed by the six Powers (Mar. 31st), Lord Derby added a rider to the effect that unless there was reciprocal disarmament by Russia and Turkey and peace between them, the Protocol should be regarded as null and void.]

II. 144

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *March 31st, 1877*

Mr. Layard's appointment as interim Ambassador at Constantinople (in place of Sir Henry Elliot) with the intention of his becoming permanent, is not regarded exactly as a friendly demonstration towards Russia, especially as it follows directly on the signing of the Protocol. My Russian colleague is much put out by it, as I had the honour to report yesterday.

Mr. Layard is known as a Turkophil and as an opponent of Russia in the East, and his appointment is taken by the Porte as an indication that England means to hold to her traditional policy of protecting Turkey.

The appointment was settled at the same Cabinet meeting at which it was agreed to sign the Protocol, and was put through by the Turkophil and anti-Russian members.

*German Note.*

The Porte rejected the Protocol on the ground that it was an attack on the dignity of Turkey, and that supervision of the Reforms by the Representatives of the Powers was contrary to treaty.

II. 145

THE EMPEROR WILLIAM TO BÜLOW, *April 13th, 1877*

Now that the die is cast, my Ambassador in London must be instructed to exercise a calming influence on the British Government, for, *tranchons le mot*, the British refusal to support the Berlin Memorandum of 1876 is responsible for the whole of the present calamity, seeing that England's abstention encouraged Servia and Montenegro to imagine the moment ripe for them to

strike,—which, failing England's abstention, would have been impossible—and we must demand of her, as we have always desired to do, the exercise of a benevolent neutrality towards Russia. It is the only possible course, which can maintain peace in Europe and confine the struggle between Russia and Turkey to the East. This is my view.

*Minute by Bülow, April 16th, 1877.*

His Majesty . . . has declared his agreement with the general instructions to Count Münster and with the results to be expected from the recognition of our neutrality. I have, however, represented that a policy of such a decided character involves responsibility, and that it is not to Russia's interest for us to destroy England's confidence. We should rather wait for Russia to express decided wishes in the matter. I also referred to the desire of the Duc Decazes to join with Germany in maintaining European peace, i.e., to sow dissension between us and England.

*German Note.*

Russia declared War on Turkey on April 24th, 1877.

## II. 147-8

*German Note.*

Nubar Pacha<sup>1</sup> from 1866-74 was Foreign Minister of the Khedive Ismael. In 1876 he fell into disfavour, but in 1878 was, under pressure by the Western Powers, placed at the head of the Egyptian Ministry, for the purpose of carrying out reforms in the finances. [The following letter reports an interview with him.]

### COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, April 24th, 1877

Nubar Pacha has been in London some days. He spent yesterday evening at my house. I trust it may be worth while for Your Excellency to learn the views of this interesting Oriental statesman.

The object of his presence here is—and he has pretty well admitted it to me—to pave the way for a British Protectorate over Egypt. (BISMARCK: 'Very sensible')

Nubar Pacha's fixed opinion is that the War cannot be localised, and he believes that the Ottoman Empire will collapse. He gives two reasons for this. In Europe Russia desires a free passage through the Dardanelles, and if not to possess Constantinople, at any rate to obtain a preponderating influence there,—in fact, a kind of protectorate. The Porte, by itself, is too weak to withstand this.

England, however, could not suffer the control of the Dardanelles to fall into the hands of her rival in the East without a

<sup>1</sup> See Sir V. Chirol. *Fifty Years in a Changing World*, p. 47, et seq.

struggle, and would therefore be forced, however much she desires peace, to lay hands on Constantinople, or at any rate on the Dardanelles. Then a conflict with Russia would be unavoidable.

His second reason is that Russia will be forced to make a conquest on the Asiatic side, unless she is willing to give up her control in the Caucasus and Circassia. She will have to carry the war into Armenia, where she can reckon on the good-will of the population, in order to push the Turks farther away from the frontier; because the Circassians and the mountaineers of the Caucasus are in thorough sympathy with the Ottoman Empire, and of late years have become considerably more so. Also, speaking materially, the mountain districts could not exist without the rich granaries of Anatolia and Armenia and the Port of Batoum. The Turkish Army in Asia Minor is not in a position to withstand the excellent Russian forces in the Caucasus.

Nubar Pacha considers—and being Armenian by birth he has an exact knowledge of the conditions and appears to be well supplied with information from there—that the Russian invasion would proceed to the southward of Kars, follow the shores of Lake Van, and avoiding the fortresses of Kars and Erzeroum, march directly upon Trebizond, whilst another column would be pushed as far as the Mouth of the Tigris. These districts would amply supply the Russian Army, and, should the garrisons be shut up in Kars and Erzeroum, the Russians would be able to govern there as they pleased. If they remained firmly fixed there, they would be a permanent menace to the Persian Gulf and also to Syria.

In that event it is obvious that Egypt would have to be occupied and protected by England, and it is therefore to the interest of Egypt and its Regent to pave the way for it, and to place themselves voluntarily under British protection. Egypt cannot by herself satisfy the present-day requirements of civilisation; the reigning House is too weak and the governing class too corrupt. European control is essential, and for this reason the Egyptians prefer the British to the French. The British know how to develop foreign countries, whereas the French are too petty and grasping and commit material destruction, as has been the case in Algeria.

To my question—what the Khedive's attitude to all this was—Nubar Pacha answered with great contempt: 'If he is given his property and as much money as he wants, he is quite content; and the British can guarantee him that.' According to Nubar Pacha, ever since the murder of his friend, the Minister of Finance, the Khedive has taken to drink and is scarcely any longer accountable.

I asked Nubar Pacha how the British statesmen had received

the exposition of his plans and desires. He replied that he had not yet spoken to all the individuals who counted; they were very reluctant, but before long they would become more accessible. Until now hopes of peace had been cherished here, but now they are gone, and feeling becomes daily more Russophobe and bellicose.

Nubar Pacha is correct in this view, which is in entire agreement with my own observations.

Nubar Pacha remains here a few weeks longer. It is significant that he has ventured to put forward his ideas so soon and with such comparative frankness.

## II. 149

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*April 27th, 1877*

*Extract.*

I beg to return the Report from London of April 24th. The Chancellor requests Your Excellency to reply to Count Münster that we consider Nubar Pacha's first suggestion very comprehensible, and that he himself has been telling England for a long time that she will have to establish herself in Egypt, and that it is more to the interests of peace in Mid-Europe for her to accept a pledge than to engage in war. No declaration can be made on this point officially, but it should be explained to Count Münster, that, if the topic of Egypt as a pledge comes up, we shall not oppose it, but should, on the contrary, gladly see it happen. . . .

[In England at this time (June, 1877) there was a growing suspicion that Bismarck's European policy was not so disinterested as he would have it appear.]

## II. 152

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, *June 6th, 1877*

*Confidential.*

I can add nothing to my last Report.

In the papers and in conversation at times of vague excitement, such as these, wild notions are apt to come out. Amongst other rumours, it is now being noised abroad that Germany intends to undertake the rôle of mediator, but is at the same time pursuing selfish ends. She is agreeing to an increase of Russia's influence in the East, but is prepared to admit extension of the British sphere presumably in Egypt, only on condition of being assured of acquiring Holland on the German Ocean.

*German Note.*

In a further Report (June 12th) Count Münster wrote that even the Queen of England had believed the absurd rumours regarding Germany's



intentions concerning Holland and was only convinced of their inaccuracy, by Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador in Berlin, on the occasion of a visit paid by him at Balmoral.

I should scarcely have considered it worth while to mention these absurd rumours, had not one of the leaders of the present majority in the Lower House come to see me yesterday and asked me whether these rumours were really imaginary, as they seemed to him to be believed even in the Foreign Office. I reassured him with the promise that he and his Party need not be deterred from any plans it might cherish regarding Egypt by any fear of a conquest of Holland. I further explained to him that any reasonable German statesman must regard the possession of Holland rather as a weakness than a strength for Germany.

Preparations for an expedition are quietly going forward here in respect of transports and every sort of supplies.

## II. 153

PRINCE BISMARCK.—MEMORANDUM DICTATED AT KISSINGEN,  
*June 15th, 1877*

~~I desire that we should encourage the English, without making it too obvious, if they have intentions concerning Egypt. I consider that it will suit our interests and be better for our future to promote a compromise between England and Russia, which may establish relations between the two Powers as good as they were at the beginning of this century, and which may be followed by the rapprochement of both to ourselves. Such an aim may never be realised, but one never can tell. If only England and Russia would come to an agreement on the basis of the one controlling Egypt, and the other the Black Sea, both might find it possible to remain content with maintaining the *status quo* for a long period. At the same time, in their chief interests they might be led into a rivalry, which would practically preclude their joining in coalition against us, quite apart from the internal influences urging England against such a combination.~~

A French paper said of me lately that I suffered from 'le cauchemar des coalitions'. This sort of bogey will for long—perhaps for ever—be quite rightly feared by all German Ministers. Coalitions may be formed of the Western Powers, joined by Austria, against us, or, with more danger to us, one based on the union of Russia, Austria and France. A close rapprochement between any two of these may be taken advantage of by the third, to exercise grievous pressure upon us. My anxiety in face of these possibilities leads me to regard as desirable, not at once, but as time goes on, the following consequences of the Eastern Crisis:—(1) Gravitation of the interests of Russia and

Austria, and their mutual rivalries, towards the East ; (2) Russia to be impelled to take up a strong defensive position in the East, and on her own shores, and to stand in need of our Alliance ; (3) For England and Russia a peaceful *status quo* giving to them the same interest which we have in the maintenance of things as they are ; (4) Separation of England from France, ever hostile to us, over the Egyptian and Mediterranean Questions ; (5) Relations between Russia and Austria such as may make it difficult for them both to join in carrying on the anti-German conspiracy, which in some measure attracts the clerical and centralising elements in Austria.

If my health permitted me to work, I could fill in and develop in greater detail the picture which floats before my mind. It is not one portraying any acquisition of territory, but rather one showing a combined political situation, in which all the Powers, except France, have need of us, and are removed from the possibility of coalescing against us by the nature of their relations towards each other.

England would not consider the occupation of Egypt sufficient to remove the difficulties regarding the Dardanelles. The system of double-guardianship, with the Dardanelles for England and the Bosphorus for Russia, is risky for England, because, all things considered, her forts on the Dardanelles could be easier taken, than defended, by land troops. That fact is probably present in the minds of the Russians, who, moreover, may possibly be not displeased to see the Black Sea closed for a generation. The whole question will be a matter for negotiation, and the combined result, as it appears in my mind, can be thoroughly worked out just as well after as before the decisive battles of the present war. I should regard it as an important asset for us, which would outweigh the probable injury to our interests in the Black Sea, which it may bring in its train,—quite apart from the possible security for the latter, which the Treaty may contain. Even if a war between England and Russia could not be prevented, our aim should, in my opinion, continue to stand as before, namely, to promote a peace which would satisfy both parties, at Turkey's expense.

## II. 155

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, June 28th, 1877

Nubar Pacha is again in London, and I have seen him several times.

As I reported before, he would be glad to see Egypt under British protection, and I have reason for supposing that, in spite of the Khedive's disfavour, Nubar is working in collusion with him.

He is quite out of touch with the members of the Cabinet; both he and they have, both on his first visit and now, avoided a meeting. He complains of the carelessness and lack of foresight and energy of the present Government and says that the only Englishmen, who fail to understand England's need of Egypt, are the Ministers. The British Lion seems to him so fast asleep that his teeth and claws could easily be stolen from him without his waking.

He has met with the friendliest spirit in the Army, the City and from all officials in the Foreign Office, India Office and Treasury. In those quarters where it is understood the real interests lie, they laugh at those Ministers, who condemn the annexation of Egypt as immoral, whilst they calmly connive at the annexation of the Transvaal Republic, a slice of territory about the size of France, and actually take credit for it.

Lord Derby, who dislikes anything like an active policy, is always saying that, if England does think of increasing her power, Russia cannot hinder her from doing so. But he forgets that his own policy is not hindering Russia from doing the same.

British statesmen seem to me more than ever like rich dilettantes, living from day to day, ignoring the future of their country and confusing the position of affairs in their minds.

Eastern affairs being as they now are, England finds only two directions in which to move. She must either cling to her traditional policy of the integrity of Turkey, and take up arms for her, as she did in the Crimea, or she must divide the Turkish inheritance with Russia and must either amicably or by war make good her claim to her share in the increase of power. The necessary determination is lacking in the British statesmen of to-day, who are failing both to protect Turkish integrity and to hinder the extension of Russia's power. Their hesitating and contradictory policy is bound to become more evident and more difficult to pursue, as the forward action of Russia develops. This lack of policy places England at a disadvantage with Russia, with her hard and fast plan of action and determined aims.

Russia . . . desires unconditional and complete control of the Black Sea, which, as soon as its Asiatic ports are in Russian hands, is to become a Russian lake,—the line of defence of Constantinople, and to tear down the barrier of the Danube and Balkans where possible. She will then allow Turkey to continue a powerless existence, as a Russian Protectorate inside the Russian sphere of influence, so that she may work her will with Constantinople, in the event of future complications.

If England refuses to prevent this, but, on the other hand, wishes not to throw away her communications with India, in fact, if she wishes not to lose all her prestige in India, the East

and in Europe, she must for the sake of self-preservation strengthen her position in the Mediterranean. This can be done with any hope of practical success only by possessing herself of Egypt. . . .

The idea suggested here by Nubar Pacha, which ought to appeal strongly to Lord Beaconsfield (considering his race), is, so to speak, to buy Egypt, i.e., to indemnify Turkey for the Egyptian Tribute, which is already held as a pledge in London for the Turkish Loan of 1854, and to pay for it with a capital sum or an annual interest, and then to come to an agreement with Egypt.

Such transferences of power as these cannot, however, be treated as a mere commercial transaction, and therefore, noteworthy as the idea may be, will not be let pass as simply as Nubar Pacha seems to imagine. . . .

~~It is right that the acquisition of Egypt would be a painful blow to France, and that is a reason for its being so much in the interests of Germany, but it would not be right, if England, out of consideration for France, consented to hold her hand— even more wrong are the theories which govern the outlook of certain British statesmen, and, I think to some extent, Lord Derby himself. They say that if France renounces some of her influence in the Mediterranean, she is bound in the future to seek compensation in the North and in the English Channel; and that she is sure to insist on getting Belgium with Antwerp. This is held not to be an impossible supposition, as Germany then could be satisfied with the acquisition of Holland.~~

It is extraordinary how this latter idea finds credence amongst the English, who in other respects are so practical and reasonable. I partially convinced Lord Derby of its absurdity, and Lord Odo Russell has certainly been working in the same direction.

Lord Odo is a strong supporter of a policy of action and entirely favours the acquisition of Egypt. But he complains deeply that he can find no one in the Cabinet to give serious consideration to the plan; whilst he is convinced that English public opinion is in favour of it and would shrink from no sacrifice in order to carry it through.

[The Ambassador went on to complain of the influence of France, which in spite of her defeat and of British dissatisfaction at the unconstitutional methods of Marshal MacMahon, was still strong in this country.]

Through the Orléans', who have lived here so long, and indeed from the period of the Empire, France still possesses many points of connection with the English aristocracy, a fact which explains the influence she exercises, in spite of her defeats and all her internal troubles. . . .

II. 158

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, AMBASSADOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE,  
TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *July 10th, 1877*

Buyukdere.

*Very confidential.*

As I reported to Your Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh visited me here and also dined with me.

The Prince expressed himself very openly upon the political situation and blamed most severely the policy of the British Government, whose false conception of their country's interests was driving England into war. He was a good patriot and British interests ranked first with him, but he was unable to understand how a future Russian victory would necessarily threaten British interests in India. England was demanding the freedom of the Suez Canal, i.e., a passage through Turkish waters, and would not admit that Russia's demand for a free passage through the other Turkish channel, namely the Bosphorus, was essential to Russia's interests. That was illogical.

Every assurance on the subject offered by the Russian Government to the British Ministers would fall on deaf ears. He regretfully admitted that the Queen's ideas on this point were even stiffer than those of Her Ministers. Her mistrust of the Emperor's word was invincible, and her belief that Russia means to injure British interests wherever she can, was so firmly rooted, that the Prince feared the Queen would regard war against Russia as a justifiable action in defence of British interests. . . .

He himself was almost alone in holding these opinions, but was convinced that, if a General Election took place now, there would be a majority against going to war. . . .

*Note by Prince Bismarck.*

I expressed myself very fully in Berlin against the British Ambassador and against interference by England. From unofficial meddling on the part of Royalty and from any personal appeal made by His Majesty to Queen Victoria over the heads of the British Ministers I expect only confusion in our relations with England and, moreover, for the peace no practical success. Henceforward Prince Reuss should write 'confidentially', and this letter must be placed amongst the secret documents.

*German Note.*

In a despatch, written on December 27th, 1877, Lord Odo Russell informed Lord Derby that he had commissioned the Ambassador in St. Petersburg to ask the Russian Government 'whether the Emperor of Russia was inclined *agréer des ouvertures de paix*'. At the same time the British Government expressed the hope 'that the initiative being taken by it would not cause a diminution of the support of the German Government, as well as of the other neutral Powers, who must be in sympathy with the desire of Her Majesty's Government to aid in bringing about an end of the War'. On December 30th Prince Gortchakoff

announced (through d'Onbril, in Berlin) that he had at the Emperor's command replied to the British question, to the effect that Russia desired peace, but not through the mediation of a third party. The Porte should approach the Russian High Command in Asia and Europe directly, and so learn the conditions for breaking off hostilities.

## II. 163

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, AMBASSADOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE,  
TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *January 15th, 1878*

*Confidential.*

I have often mentioned to Your Excellency the part played by the British Ambassador, with or without orders from his Government, ever since December 11th, the day on which the surrender at Plevna became known.

He has never ceased to dissuade the Porte from following the correct path, i.e., that of direct negotiations with Russia, and on the other side, he is urging his own Government, as I learned from speeches made by him, to pursue an active Turkish policy.

I am not alone here in conjecturing that his action will tend considerably to postpone the end of the War, and that this policy will, therefore, have been full of consequences for Turkey.

During the last week, in spite of increasingly definite assurances by British Ministers of England's peaceful intentions, there has been no cessation of these activities. Although it must have been becoming more and more evident to the Turkish Ministers that they have nothing to hope for from England, they have never stopped applying to the British Ambassador for advice again and again.

Edhem Pasha was dismissed, because the Sultan was determined to break with the policy of his Grand Vizier who was all for fighting to the last for the independence and integrity of Turkey,—and to sue for peace. Nevertheless, Server Pasha was conferring daily with Mr. Layard, who dictated every step he took, and was deluding him, even at the eleventh hour, with the assurance that England would take it as an insult to herself, that Russia was not demanding cessation of hostilities pure and simple, but rather an Armistice accompanied by Peace-preliminaries.

I learn on good authority that my British colleague has, during the last few days, urged this policy on his home Government with all his force. No reply is vouchsafed to him, and I think I am correct in surmising that the useless postponement of the Plenipotentiaries' departure for the Russian Headquarters is due to the circumstance that the Turkish Ministry has been kept by assurances, emanating from the British Embassy, in a state of expectation of the longed for reply, or that on the date fixed

for the Opening of Parliament (January 17th) there will be a complete swing of the pendulum in favour of Turkey.

The same authority informs me that a reply has now been received. But it merely contains an instruction to the Ambassador to advise the Porte to make the best peace that it can, and that England reserves the protection of her own interests for a later occasion.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN

#### PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN VIENNA, ST. PETERSBURG AND BERLIN

##### II. 171

[In January, 1878, Count Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, urged that a Conference should be held at Vienna to determine the terms of peace between Russia and Turkey. To his Ambassador at Berlin, Count Karolyi, he wrote on the 28th:]

‘On this point I am confident that, taking into consideration our present relations towards Germany and England and also the views of His Majesty and myself, the choice of Vienna as the seat of a Conference will hinder any rapprochement between Russia and France (if such were conceivable) or between France and England.’

##### II. 174

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *January*  
*30th, 1878*

*Extract.*

I have time to-day only for a few comments on Karolyi's communication. I have no idea as to the point on which he asks for an immediate reply from us. It is clear that we cannot hold aloof from the Conference so urgently demanded by Austria, if it actually takes place, and particularly so, supposing Russia has accepted it. But at this stage we can form no further opinion. I do not understand the reason for the move unless it is that Austria intends this Conference to be a bridge to bring her nearer to England.

##### II. 175

SCHWEINITZ, IN ST. PETERSBURG, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN  
OFFICE, *February 1st, 1878*

*Telegram.*

Prince Gortchakoff spoke to me on the subject of a Conference and said: ‘If either Vienna or London is chosen, we shall not take part. I should have no objection at all to Berlin.’



II. 185

*The same to the same, February 5th, 1878.*

In my opinion the real reasons for Russia's decided refusal to accept Vienna as the seat of a Conference are the following: There is an objection to the choice of M. Novikoff (Russian Ambassador in Vienna), because he is too much under the influence of Count Andrassy. Also Count Andrassy is disliked as Chairman, and Sir Henry Elliot would be unwelcome as British representative. Prince Gortchakoff would prefer a town in a small state and his suggestion of Berlin, which must have cost him no small effort, proves how strong is his objection to Vienna.

II. 181

MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *February 2nd, 1878**Extract.*

I fail to understand why Count Andrassy takes the trouble to point out that the present situation has no analogy with that of 1870. Austria is under no obligation to set up historical analogies. She needs but to realise what are her own interests, and if these demand that she should intervene between victors and vanquished, only force, and not the analogy of 1870, could prevent it. If we were obliged to resort to force, France would not be France if she allowed us to do so with impunity. We should thus be left along with Russia,—whose army is held fast in Turkey,—face to face with a coalition of Austria, England and France, not to speak of Turkey; not indeed a desperate, but still a very dangerous situation. We also can find no analogy with 1870. It may be true that Russia at that period held Austria in check, but she had amply sufficient political reasons of her own in Poland and the East. Russia could not afford to see a victorious French army before Kalish, considering the policy of Austria towards Poland since 1863, and this was the reason why Russia prevented a coalition of France and Austria, two Powers friendly to Poland. Moreover, in 1870, Russia had no anxiety with regard to France, supposing she fell out with Austria. The Turks were not likely to attack Russia; whereas we, in breaking with Austria, should have to deal with France, the second strongest military Power in Europe, with the certainty that she would attack us at the first favourable opportunity, and not only with France, but with Austria and England as well, and we should have no prospect of military aid from Russia. How could we defend our action in bringing the German people into such a situation?

Hence, I am firmly convinced that it is not correct policy for us to bend the Vienna Cabinet to the will of Russia either by threats or by force. It would not alter my conviction, even if

Russia had dealt with us with more honesty and consideration than she has, and had more cause for displeasure against Austria than the latter's modest desire to see the intended Conference meet at Vienna as the reward for all her acts of compliance.

I do not believe that at present we are called upon to take the lead in open opposition to Russia. One only makes communications of this sort, when they can no longer be avoided, and one hopes to the last that they may prove unnecessary. But I felt the necessity of speaking openly to your Excellency (Bülow) and I ask for your views and that you will communicate your conclusions to His Majesty. We can at most, if the mutual relations of our two friends become worse, once make a friendly representation to St. Petersburg of our wish that German interests, which rest on our relations with Austria and Count Andrassy's attitude, shall not be lost sight of. I am convinced that the latter would maintain better relations with Gortchakoff by following the example of England and relying on the military strength of Austria rather than on written arguments and on his confidence in honourable intentions. We, however, cannot offer him advice of this sort, if he fails to think of it for himself.

## II. 175

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE,  
BERLIN, *February 1st, 1878*

### *Telegram.*

Lord Derby handed a further Memorandum to Count Shouvaloff the day before yesterday. It states that England cannot permit the occupation of Constantinople by Russian troops and closes with a sentence to the effect that, if it happens, England will regretfully find herself compelled to take energetic measures to protect the threatened interests.

## II. 187

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*February 6th, 1878*

### *Extract.*

Any discussion of formalities is premature, until we know, even if the place is agreed upon, whether the Conference will meet at all. I shall not consider this question settled, until the Russo-Turkish conditions are generally and publicly known to all parties. They may turn out to be such that England and Austria will refuse to accept them as a basis for a Conference, and it will be better for the chances of peace that this point should be cleared up beforehand, than that the announcement of the Russian proposals should lead to an immediate break-up of the

Conference. I cannot form a conception in what direction the President would wish to launch the Conference without previous knowledge of the details of the Russo-Turkish agreement.

I consider that it will serve a useful purpose, if we start by informing Austria confidentially that the question whether Russia will be willing to furnish an authentic statement of her latest agreements, and what these consist of, is almost more important than the decision as to where the Conference is to be held.

In regard to the last point, in any case, it will be advisable for us to make no proposal of mediation. The suggestion of Berlin would certainly have to be made by other parties; also that of Paris.

*German Note.*

On February 13th British ships under Admiral Hornby sailed into the Sea of Marmora without a Firman from the Sultan and anchored off the Isle des Princes.

[The Czar promptly took up the challenge.]

II. 191-2

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *February 15th, 1878*

M. d'Oubril read to me to-day the telegraphic correspondence between the Emperor Alexander and the Sultan regarding the arrival of the British Fleet. It consists of an absolutely confidential telegram sent by Count Münster on the 13th and of the Emperor Alexander's reply, in which he refuses the assurance that Constantinople shall not be occupied, with the hint that, if the British carry out their intentions, the Sultan may conceive such an idea of his own importance, as to cause him to disregard the points, which the Emperor considers essential. . . .

Russia could no longer admit that the principles established at the Conference of Constantinople (November, 1876, to January, 1877) could be considered to stand without modification.<sup>1</sup> The war and events arising from it rendered important alterations essential.

The above applies especially in the case of Bulgaria. The idea that this country would be satisfied by the appointment of a Governor dependent on the Sultan, by improvements in administration and an occupation by a Belgian garrison, was untenable.

M. d'Oubril considered Lord Salisbury's plan of dividing Bulgaria into two halves along its length impossible in practice. We had seen the results of similar experiments in Moldavia and Wallachia. The preservation of peace in that country and the avoidance of fresh crises in Europe depended on an undivided, autonomous Bulgaria, tributary to the Porte. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 44.

[The determined attitude of the British Government was followed by an alarm of war between England and Russia.]

## II. 193-4

PRINCE BISMARCK TO SCHWEINITZ, IN ST. PETERSBURG, *February 20th, 1878*

Lord Odo Russell, himself naturally a peace-lover, was convinced on Saturday that war was imminent and was instructed to ask me what attitude Germany would adopt towards it. I informed d'Oubril of this confidentially. On Monday telegrams arrived from London and Vienna, urging us to arrange for the Conference at an early date, England adding that an early meeting promised the last remaining chance of staving off war. Münster shares in this opinion, as stated by Russell. The postponement of the Conference, which according to your telegram, No. 45, is imminent, may produce far-reaching consequences. Prince Gortchakoff is quite aware what he is about and does not need our advice; but I beg that you will communicate the foregoing facts to him.

## II. 194

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *February 21st, 1878*

To-day M. d'Oubril read to me:

I. A telegram en clair from Prince Gortchakoff. Russia would accept Baden-Baden as the seat of the Congress, but not the second week of March as the opening date. The interval of time was too short to allow for the sending and proper instruction of the Plenipotentiaries. Prince Gortchakoff would refuse to come, if Prince Bismarck and Lord Derby did not come also.

II. From a telegram in cypher. The interval of time was too short also, because it was desirable to obtain a clearer idea of the relations towards England. They had improved during the last days; nevertheless, the whole situation needed clearing up. The interval could be usefully employed in arriving at an understanding *en trois* at Vienna.

## II. 194

*The same, February 22nd, 1878*

Lord Odo Russell informed me confidentially last evening that Lord Derby intended, in order to clear the situation regarding any advance by the Russians in the Bosphorus or against Constantinople, to hand to Count Shouvaloff a memorandum to the effect that, if a satisfactory assurance were refused, the British Ambassador might have to be recalled.

He added that it was known in London that General Ignatieff had put forward demands in excess of anything that had been contemplated. Even if the assertion that he was demanding an extension of Bulgaria, as far as Janina, was an exaggeration, it was an ascertained fact that he was demanding an increase of territory and independence greater than was allowed by the decisions of the Conference, the surrender of the Turkish Fleet and immediate signature of the secret conditions. The Sultan was refusing to surrender the Fleet and intended to burn it, if pushed to extremities. In London there was little expectation that the Conference would take place.

## II. 195

*The same, February 23rd, 1878*

M. d'Oubril read me to-day a telegram of the 21st, containing Count Shouvaloff's report of Lord Derby's overtures confidentially communicated by Lord Odo Russell. It states that Mr. Layard (British Ambassador at Constantinople) has telegraphed that the Russians are on the point of advancing on Constantinople with 30,000 troops, and that they are demanding the inclusion in the Peace Conditions, amongst other points, of the surrender of the Fleet and the withdrawal of all Turks, even children and old people, from Bulgaria. The Sultan is protesting against the advance. Upon which, Lord Derby declares that if the Russians occupy Constantinople without the Sultan's agreement, Lord Augustus Loftus will be withdrawn at once (from St. Petersburg).

Upon this Prince Gortchakoff telegraphed 'by the Emperor's orders' yesterday that owing to interruption of telegraphic communications with Adrianople the Cabinet in St. Petersburg was without news. Nevertheless, it could be declared with certainty that the expulsions from Bulgaria were limited to Turkish officials and soldiers. Further, that the British action seemed illogical. Russia and England had similar intentions, namely, in case of the occupation of Constantinople, to protect their nationals. To this end England had sent ships into the Bosphorus against the will of the Sultan and wished to prohibit Russia from doing likewise, without the Sultan's permission. The Emperor intended to do what was necessary ;—' L'Angleterre fera ce qu'elle voudra.'

M. d'Oubril described this very stiff telegram as the justified expression of his Imperial Master's impatience at the British interference, which had now become intolerable, and added the remark that Count Shouvaloff would find some difficulty in communicating it. At the same time he read some passages from confidential letters written by Prince Gortchakoff to himself

and M. Novikoff. These referred principally to the desire for negotiations *en trois*, recognition of the importance of the Drei-Kaiser-Bundniss, and the hope that Germany would exercise her influence in this direction in Vienna *par un langage ferme*. The latest news from Vienna was better; there seemed to be willingness to negotiate about the occupation of Bulgaria. The St. Petersburg Cabinet was aware that the Emperor Francis Joseph wished to adhere to the Drei-Kaiser-Bundniss for reasons of internal policy and for fear of social dangers (it sounded like an indication of a change of Minister). It was to be regretted, however, that Austria had lately turned her back on the Bundniss and become much too friendly with England. One should not judge from appearances and rumours, but all the difficulties which were now jeopardising the conclusion of peace dated from the moment when Austria entered into opposition. (Note by PRINCE BISMARCK: '*Since the refusal of Vienna for the Conference.*') Since then England had taken up her present position, and Turkey had gained fresh courage to show unwillingness to come to an agreement. In this connection it must be observed that England had really no grounds for resisting the Preliminaries of Peace;—against autonomous Slav Provinces (the only outstanding problem, still unsettled) England could put forward no objection at the Conference; whereas Austria would find good reasons for doing so. Thus the fault would be Austria's, if Russia were exposed to the risk of a political defeat after her great triumphs in a war full of sacrifices. Prince Gortchakoff was hoping all the more for an understanding with Germany's help.

I limited myself to the remark that after the recent speech of the Imperial Chancellor (in the Reichstag, February 19th, 1878, describing himself as 'the honest broker, who gets the business done'), Germany's position with regard to the suggested negotiations *en trois* was sufficiently defined, and that the great stress, which Prince Gortchakoff now apparently laid upon Austria's attitude and upon an understanding, was rendering its success more probable.

## II. 198

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, *February 25th*,  
1878

The political situation is now so incomprehensible, and the position into which this Government has got the country and itself so peculiar and unaccountable, that the best informed and most conscientious report runs the risk of appearing obscure and confused.

wards, and accepts conditions which have no meaning, supposing that Russia after all cherishes hostile intentions, but which under certain circumstances may prove very hampering to England and may be used against her.

Lord Derby's acceptance of Russia's latest announcement as satisfactory has astounded no one more than my Russian colleague. People here are on the whole highly dissatisfied with the text, now that it is known, and were it not that the serious situation has caused party politics to be set aside for the time being, the Government would not remain in power for a day.

No one turns even the worst driver off the box, when the carriage is on the edge of a precipice. Every one sees that no worse moment could have been chosen for despatching the Fleet, and the whole affair could not have been more incapably conducted.

The Sultan, who four weeks ago would have welcomed the British Fleet as a deliverer, now begs and prays the Queen and the Ministers to withdraw it. Russia threatens in peremptory terms to march into Constantinople, unless the Fleet is withdrawn. The British Ministers cannot agree to this, for if they were to, they could not go through the streets in safety, for fear of violence, and, moreover, their majority in the Commons would disappear. Already a substantial section of the Conservatives is saying: 'A Liberal Government would be better, for then we should know where we are.'

The Russian demand for the surrender of six war-ships—the first report here mentioned the whole fleet—is very badly received here, for it was a blow aimed at England alone. If Russia really means war, which seems absurd to any reasonable man, she is choosing the surest way of bringing it on. It is true that England has no legal right to protest against the sale or surrender of the Turkish war-ships, but she will find some other means to stop it and seek another *casus belli*. But if Russia truly holds that there is no risk involved in going to war with England (and I was almost tempted to assume this from the expressions used by Prince Gortchakoff to my colleague), I consider that she underestimates the strength of England, and I cannot believe that Russia would be so unwise as to jeopardise her present great advantage in a fresh war.

It is obvious that war with England would react strongly upon Austria and make it impossible for her to maintain the same attitude as hitherto. . . .

Now Lord Derby is threatening that, if Russia remains stationary or advances nearer to Constantinople, England will refuse to countenance or take any part in the Conference or to accept its decisions. Count Shouvaloff retorts that nothing

would give Russia greater satisfaction, for the Conference is, after all, merely a concession on the part of Russia to the other Powers.

Yesterday a Workmen's Union, led by the Honble. Auberon Herbert, a brother of Lord Carnarvon, had arranged a Peace Meeting in Hyde Park. (Mr. Herbert is somewhat of an eccentric and styles himself a 'workmen's friend and gentleman Socialist'.)<sup>1</sup> A so-called War-Meeting also assembled, but contented itself with overturning the table on which Mr. Herbert was standing, and breaking up the meeting. There appear to have been over seventy thousand people in the Park. Afterwards one section went to Mr. Gladstone's house and broke his windows, whilst the larger number proceeded to Downing Street and cheered Mr. Disraeli. Considering the size of the crowd, it is remarkable that further violence was not committed.

<sup>1</sup> English in the text.



## CHAPTER V

### THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN—II

#### GERMAN MEDIATION BETWEEN ENGLAND AND RUSSIA<sup>1</sup>

[The Russo-Turkish Treaty of Peace having been signed at San Stefano on March 3rd, 1878, the arrangements for the Congress to be held at Berlin went forward]

II. 208

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *March 6th, 1878*

Shortly before the departure of the Messenger I saw Lord Derby, who, through his Ambassadors at St. Petersburg, Vienna and Berlin, had learnt that it is settled that the Congress shall be held in Berlin. Vienna has not yet made an official proposal here.

Lord Derby appears much put out by this new turn of affairs. He said that he could make no official statement until he had discussed the matter with his colleagues and Lord Beaconsfield. Moreover, the formal proposals were not yet laid before him. In any case England would not be represented by the Foreign Secretary. The British Government would have preferred the Congress to be held at Baden.

Lord Derby also fears that public opinion might imagine (rightly or wrongly he would not say), that the Congress, if held in Berlin, would assume a more Russian complexion. If it were certain that Prince Bismarck was to be its President, much of the distrust concerning it would disappear; but there was a fear that out of courtesy and under pressure of his other engagements Prince Bismarck would concede the office of President to Prince Gortchakoff, and this was not desired.

There was great distrust of Russia and less confidence in Austria than formerly; and this suggestion would awaken the suspicion that the three Empires had arrived at some agreement, which would be to the disadvantage of Great Britain. Although he might not share these alarms, he was bound to recognise their existence and to take account of them.

<sup>1</sup> See *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II; the *Life of Lord Beaconsfield*; and the *Life of the Marquess of Salisbury*.

Lord Derby said that these utterances were quite confidential, but I consider myself bound to communicate them to Your Highness.

To me it appears that England will raise difficulties before she will consent to the proposal. As soon as I hear anything more definite, I will report it by telegraph.

II. 209

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, *March 8th, 1878.*

M. d'Oubril read me Prince Gortchakoff's despatch, which instructs him to express here in the warmest and most grateful terms the thanks of the Emperor Alexander, and also of Prince Gortchakoff, for the acceptance of the proposal to hold a Congress in Berlin. The Emperor felt complete confidence in Germany's equity and in her friendly mediation during the coming negotiations, the successful conclusion of which would reflect on Germany no less glory than had her brilliant military achievements.

Prince Gortchakoff, moreover, gives special expression to his personal gratification at the prospect of meeting the Imperial Chancellor. He is proud to be able to renew his former relations with him, 'les plus beaux souvenirs de sa vie, à une occasion digne du génie du Prince Bismarck.'

M. d'Oubril said that the arrival of General Ignatieff, bringing with him the text of the Peace Treaty, was now expected in St. Petersburg, and that Prince Gortchakoff would immediately and without delay decide on the date of his journey to the Congress. D'Oubril's personal impression was that the Congress might be expected to meet towards the end of this month.

II. 210

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*March 9th, 1878*

I had the honour to report yesterday that after three prolonged meetings the Cabinet decided on accepting the Austrian proposal regarding the holding of the Congress in Berlin. The necessity to hold three meetings in order to come to a decision proves the seriousness of the doubts concerning it. This decision is not unconditional, and the question of British participation is even now in doubt. The knowledge that the proposal originated with Prince Gortchakoff has revived the distrust of Russia. There has been such deep suspicion that the three Empires have come to a preliminary understanding and that British interests will not be sufficiently safeguarded at the Congress, that until yesterday morning it was generally assumed that the answer would be unfavourable. The day before yesterday the Cabinet had decided

provisionally to refuse, but at yesterday's sitting it was successfully urged that it was better not to adopt an attitude of complete abstention, as in the Berlin Memorandum,<sup>1</sup> and that England must find other means to secure her interests. She is now seeking this assurance in the demand that the basis for negotiation shall be fixed beforehand, and she makes it a preliminary condition that *all* the conditions of Peace and of the San Stefano settlement shall be laid before the Congress, and that it shall decide which of them need ratification by the Signatory Powers.

Lord Derby has referred this question of the settlement of the bases of peace to Count Beust and has requested him to communicate to him the views of the Austrian Government on it. Count Beust's answer is that he has had no instructions about the matter, but that the German Imperial Government, which, after provisional consent has been given by all the Powers, is to be responsible for the formal invitations to the Congress, can best undertake the negotiations on this question. In my position I have no means of knowing to what extent the Imperial Government is inclined to adopt this course; so I have merely given Lord Derby a non-committal answer to the effect that I am entirely without instructions in the matter.

The demand that all the Peace conditions shall be laid before the Congress and the announcement that England would consider as binding only those Articles to which she herself shall have agreed, have a two-fold object. First, she wishes to guard against any secret Treaties between Russia and Turkey, and, secondly, she wishes it clearly understood that she keeps a free hand regarding any alterations in the Treaty provisions, to which she ~~shall not have agreed at the Congress.~~

The above is not in accordance with the intentions of the Russian Cabinet, which has always insisted and made assurances to its own nation that it will only allow discussion and European sanction regarding the points which it, the Russian Cabinet, regards as departures from the Treaties of 1856 and 1871, and that all other matters are the concern of the belligerent Powers.

Here in London they expect that the settlement of the basis of negotiations for the Congress will lead to prolonged discussion, and that Russia will be reluctant to agree to the preliminary conditions, and the number of those who utterly oppose England's participation in the Congress, continues to increase rapidly.

The feeling against the Congress exists in both the Parliamentary parties and even in a section of the Ministry—notably in Lord Beaconsfield himself. It springs partly from a suspicion that there has been a preliminary understanding between the three Emperors and partly from the fear that Great Britain

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 22.

cannot find representatives capable of meeting on equal terms the talent and ability that will be gathered at Berlin. The fact that there is no Cabinet Minister fully qualified to represent England abroad is a very sore point. Lord Beaconsfield speaks very little French ; Lord Salisbury was unnerved by the experiences of his first Conference and reaped neither gratitude nor thanks from his fellow-countrymen. The most natural representative of England, Lord Derby, is entirely unfitted by his personality. He no longer enjoys the confidence of his own country and his colleagues, and has declared that he will in no circumstances leave the Foreign Office, as long as Parliament is assembled. ✓

Lord Lyons (British Ambassador at Paris) told me that he was very reluctant to undertake this task, highly honourable though it might be, as it would place him in a very difficult position with the Ministers at the Congress and with his own home Government. But he seemed to take it for granted that the Congress was fated never to take place, for, as far as could be learnt, Russia would find difficulty in coming into line with the British conditions.

Lord Beaconsfield said to my Austrian colleague yesterday : ' I hope it will be clearly understood that we shall *not* attend the Congress if Russia does not agree to lay all the conditions and stipulations before it.' His tone was excessively bellicose, and he declared that preparations for war would be proceeded with more energetically than ever.

Public opinion inclines more and more towards peace again. The conviction is growing that it is too late for isolated action.

## II. 212

*The same, London, March 9th, 1878*

Lord Derby told me that the Greek Government had expressed the desire to be admitted to the Congress or the Conference, as Greek interests were sure to be substantially affected and ought to be represented. Lord Derby had promised, as far as it lay with the British Government, to take account of the request. He felt that even if the other Powers declined to admit a Greek Plenipotentiary for the whole business of the Congress, it would only be just that the Greek Government should have the right of entry *ad hoc*, when questions affecting Greek interests were to be discussed.

A similar request, which had been made by Roumania also, he regarded as not being so well justified, for Roumania was already protected by the Russian arrangements.

There is no doubt that sympathy for Greece has greatly increased here of late both in the Government and in Parliament, and that the idea of protecting the Greek element from the Slav has

gained ground. 'We must play the Greek against the Slav' is a commonly heard expression.

## II. 212-13

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *March 9th, 1878*

The French Ambassador read me a despatch to-day, in which he is empowered by M. Waddington (French Foreign Minister) to communicate confidentially that France gladly accepts the Austrian invitation to come to Berlin instead of Baden-Baden, in the constant desire to contribute most actively to the good understanding and harmony of the Powers. Count St. Vallier (French Ambassador at Berlin) added that M. Waddington had fallen in with the proposal all the more readily, since the Congress was to take place in Berlin under the Chairmanship of the Imperial Chancellor and was thus assured of a successful issue. He would be honoured to be the first Plenipotentiary, and it was intended that Count St. Vallier should be the second. Moreover, France was acting on the assumption (already made known via Vienna) that discussion should be confined to questions arising out of the Treaty of Peace only, but not—as M. de St. Vallier remarked in explanation—Danish, Dutch or Polish aspirations.

I thanked him for the information and answered that, as far as we were concerned, we should have no objection to such restrictions and should merely regard the Conference as meeting *ad hoc*.

The British Ambassador has declared acceptance of the invitation by letter, but qualifies it by a second confidential communication to the effect that Lord Derby requires that—

(1) All questions raised by the Russo-Turkish Peace Treaty shall be regarded as subjects for discussion by the Congress; and

(2) No alteration whatever of the situation set up by the Treaties shall be recognised as valid, before the sanction of the Powers has been extended to it. The Austrian Government has been asked whether it is prepared to suggest any kind of basis for the Congress.

M. d'Oubril has now at last returned answer to the first British demand and conditions; Prince Gortchakoff's reply was: that Russia is ready to lay before the Powers all points that have a general interest to Europe, and that no answer can be given to the British demand for the production of the entire Treaty.

M. d'Oubril remarked that the above could not be regarded as a settlement of the question, since the definition and extent of European interests was capable of bearing various interpretations, even after taking into consideration questions of International

Law or those affecting Power and Balance of Power. It was in his mind that it might be simplest for Germany to enclose with the coming invitations a definition of the task and the objects of the discussions in Conference. It was after all only a question of discussing such matters as affected the Powers of Europe.

I replied that, as far as I could see, this also would not solve the problem. In my opinion it was Russia's duty to make the first move, as being the Power that demanded European sanction for a revision of the Treaties of Europe. It could hardly be disputed that some of the stipulations mentioned by him in this connection, such as compensation for war burdens and Russian subjects, renewal of old treaties, the monks of Athos, were not included amongst them,—but how far such points were essentially connected with others could certainly not be determined in advance.

Regarding the date of meeting, M. d'Oubril repeated that St. Petersburg required further time for preparation and deprecated undue haste.

## II. 214

MEMORANDUM BY BÜLOW, *March 9th, 1878*

Our conception of the basis of the Conference is as follows :

The Conference meets to examine those Articles in the Peace of San Stefano, which affect former European Treaties, to wit, the Peace of Paris, 1856, and the London enactments, 1871.

(BISMARCK : '*Of course.*')

The first requirement for the business of the Conference is consequently the communication of those Articles by the Powers concerned, Russia and Turkey.

The negotiations may attain wider proportions, since the other Powers, on becoming acquainted with the Treaty of San Stefano, may offer objections, protests and counter-proposals. (BISMARCK *places brackets round 'protests'.*)

Regarding counter-proposals, the French Government desire to be assured that no questions will come forward for discussion, which do not arise immediately out of the Treaty conditions. We are free from anxiety on this point and should ourselves also demand and (*the last three words are inserted by PRINCE BISMARCK*) gladly furnish a like assurance, as far as we are concerned, and trust, moreover, that the other Powers would be of the same mind.

As regards the date for the meeting of the Conference, we shall wait until the other Powers are agreed, and shall choose the moment for issuing the invitations in accordance with the wishes of all the other participants.

## II. 215

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*March 10th, 1878*

*Cipher telegram. Secret.*

Prince Gortchakoff telegraphs to Count Shouvaloff that Russia will not agree to the British stipulation. The Count makes no formal communication of this, since the British answer went not to him, but to Vienna. He is, nevertheless, attempting to suggest further modifications, in the sense that, although Russia may not submit all the Peace conditions, yet the Congress may draw into the discussion isolated points of the Treaty, which will then be common knowledge.

The Powers are now faced by the question whether the Congress should be given up, whether the Eastern Question can be settled by negotiations between the Powers, or whether a Congress can be held with the exclusion of England. This last is favoured by the extreme war-parties in England and Russia. For this and other reasons I consider this experiment most dangerous.

## II. 215-16

BÜLOW TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, *March 11th, 1878*

The Chancellor requests your Excellency to inform Lord Derby that he would personally have preferred the Conference to be held at Baden-Baden, and it is with reluctance that he has obtained the Emperor's sanction for it to take place at Berlin. He fully realises that however much reserve he may exercise, this arrangement saddles Germany politically with a certain degree of responsibility, which he would rather have avoided, and which would have been avoided more easily, were the Congress held elsewhere. The Prince is adding this engagement to a host of other strenuous duties, and in his indifferent state of health he would have every excuse for withdrawing from it.

The Prince's decision to fall in with the request that has been made to him is inspired by his unwillingness to expose Germany to the reproach of having deliberately neglected any means by which peace may be maintained and an understanding between the Powers assured. For this consideration alone has Berlin been accepted, and the news that England welcomes the decision is very gratifying to the Prince.

The suggestion mentioned in your telegram of March 10th, that a Conference could be held without the presence of British representatives, appears to him out of the question. The object of such a conference is to examine and pass any alterations in the Treaties of Europe arising out of the Russo-Turkish War, and

consequently the co-operation of England is indispensable. If we limited it to negotiations between the three Empires, it would not be a Conference, and could not be regarded as sanction under International Law for a re-settlement in the East. Hence the alternatives are no Conference at all or one attended by all the Powers who signed the Peace of Paris.

## II. 216

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, *March 11th*,  
1878

I have reported to Your Excellency that England's attendance at the Congress in Berlin depends on negotiations, which in my Russian colleague's opinion present so far no great prospect of success. The official Note, replying to the Austrian invitation to the Congress, was handed to Count Beust on the 9th.

The part of the Note containing the British conditions is as follows:

'Your Excellency will inform your Government that Her Majesty's Government have no objection to the proposed change. They however consider that it would be desirable to have it understood, in the first place, that all questions dealt with in the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey should be considered as subjects to be discussed in the Congress, and that no alteration in the condition of things, previously established by treaty, should be acknowledged as valid, until it has received the consent of the Powers.'

The Minister's words are more decided and peremptory than the Note, and dislike of the Congress is increasing.

Count Beust heard by telegram this morning that Prince Gortchakoff appears inclined to agree with Count Shouvaloff's proposal, which I forwarded to you yesterday. (Telegram of March 10th.) His reply is that the Russian Cabinet acknowledges that the points to be discussed at the Congress are to be those that contain European interest. He can go no further. At the same time it would still be open for any Power to bring forward isolated decisions of the Peace Treaty, before the Forum of the Congress, for it to decide whether they contain matter of European interest or not.

No direct reply has been sent to the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg as yet.

The Ministry's provisional reply, as handed to Count Beust, indicates that the Cabinet is waiting for reports from Lord Augustus Loftus. Though it is recognised that Prince Gortchakoff's answer shows a friendly spirit, it is all-important, in order that conditions of the Treaty may be brought before the



Forum of the Congress, that these shall be known, and that therefore all the stipulations must be submitted. This is the only means of guarding against secret Agreements.

Lord Beaconsfield, whom I met recently at the Prince of Wales's Levee, said to me that the Congress was to him like a dream, and that dreams seldom came true. Lord Derby, on the contrary, thought that the difficulties would be overcome.

## II. 217

COUNT ZU STOLBERG, IN VIENNA, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN  
OFFICE, *March 12th, 1878*

*Cipher telegram.*

England suggests admission of Greece to the Conference. Count Andrassy considers that invitations should only be extended to Signatory Powers and that the Congress alone can decide what other states are to be admitted.

(PRINCE BISMARCK: 'Yes.')

[Identical telegrams were sent to St. Petersburg, Vienna, Paris and Rome.]

CHAPTER VI  
THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN—III  
THE PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE

II. 218

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON,  
*March 14th, 1878*

You know that we have received a proposal to hold a Conference in Berlin, but cannot issue a formal invitation, until we know that the Powers are agreed upon the preliminary conditions of the meeting. It seems to us better not to start negotiations by means of correspondence crossing between the Cabinets, but by promoting conversations between the Second Plenipotentiaries at a Preliminary Conference, or better still, between their accredited Representatives here for the preparation of the matter and forms of the Conference. All preliminary questions, the settlement of which appears desirable in view of the actual discussions, or of the speedy and smooth course of the essential work of the Conference, could be so dealt with that the leaders would be released from the discussion of them and get quickly through the main work. One of these questions is that of the Presidency, in the event of Prince Bismarck not being able to undertake it regularly or permanently.

Please discuss the above with the Foreign Secretary and report his opinion of our proposal.

II. 219-20

PRINCE HOHENLOHE, AMBASSADOR IN PARIS, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *March 15th, 1878*

In accordance with the telegraphic instructions of March 14th I laid the Imperial Government's proposal to summon a Preliminary Conference before the Foreign Minister. M. Waddington sees no objection to the meeting of accredited representatives in Berlin to prepare the terms of reference. He stipulates that these conversations 'ne préjugent pas les solutions' of the Congress on questions yet unsettled. I was able to quote the words of the telegram and assure him that this was not the intention of the

Imperial Government. It was only designed to deal with questions, the settlement of which would enable the work of the Congress to be got through quickly. M. Waddington's unwillingness to give his reply before to-morrow is a proof of his nervousness in the domain of Foreign Politics, which are as yet unfamiliar to him.

As for the question of Presidency in the event of the Chancellor's being prevented from undertaking it, M. Waddington declared his readiness to vote for Prince Gortchakoff.

The question lying nearest to M. Waddington's heart is the prevention of an occupation of Egypt by Great Britain. The stiffness of his attitude on this subject can only be explained by the fact that on his entry into Office he declared himself definitely against such an occupation. He may enjoy the support of a section of public opinion, but not of the French owners of Egyptian Bonds, who hope that a British occupation will safeguard their interests.

## II. 222

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*March 16th, 1878*

### *Telegram.*

British objections not removed. England demands competence of the Congress over all Articles. Prince Gortchakoff refuses this assurance (BISMARCK: '*Another bâton d'arrêt!*') and gets round it by saying that he promises to keep the Powers informed. The British Cabinet has entered into such engagements with its own Parliament, as to feel unable to abate its demand for a definite statement.

Count Beust telegraphed in this sense yesterday, but has had no reply. His telegram crossed with that of Count Andrassy.

## II. 223-4

BÜLOW TO PRINCE HOHENLOHE, IN PARIS, *March 17th, 1878*  
*Extract.*

... The Chancellor has frequently expressed our point of view to Count St. Vallier by word of mouth. He has declared to him that it is not the German Government's intention to introduce at the Congress the subjects specially mentioned by M. Waddington, but that we could certainly not prevent this being done by any other Power.

I may remark that the phrase used to the Imperial Chancellor and contained in your report, dated March 13th,—'Questions directly arising out of the Russo-Turkish War'—does not cover the present position of affairs. In his opinion and according to

the impression created by the other communications concerning the meaning of the French restrictive conditions, it would seem that the decisive point is not so much the more or less vague conception of its connection with the Russo-Turkish War, but rather its relationship to the former European treaties and the changes in them caused by the late peace between Russia and Turkey. From this point of view alone can the various questions mentioned above be judged with regard to their exclusion from discussion.

If we accede to M. Waddington's wishes and announce that the restrictions to the discussion by all the Powers, as proposed by France, have been accepted, these Powers will have their own official announcements to make to us. In any case, we shall delay preparing the invitations to a conference, until the Powers have come to an agreement upon those preliminary questions which are still outstanding. This, indeed, is the object of our proposal for a preliminary conference of the representatives of the Powers now in Berlin.

Prince Bismarck is of opinion, moreover, that the French proposals to exclude Syria, the Holy Sepulchre and Tunis from discussion are merely a cloak to cover the central question of Egypt. M. Waddington's remark that the question of the Holy Places was the cause of the Crimean War is easily answered by reference to the facts of history, for the dispute about the Holy Sepulchre and the Church keys was but the pretext for political action inspired by very different motives.

## II. 226

BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER, TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON,  
*March 17th, 1878*

We cannot think of issuing the invitations, until the 'competence' question is settled and the conclusions arrived at by the participating Powers have been communicated to us. The 'competence' of the Congress, i.e. the right to discuss and decide certain definite points, can in our opinion only be settled by general and voluntary agreement between the Powers. Even the British Ministers have now declared that no pressure may be brought to bear on Minorities by the Congress.

The settling of the programme for the discussions is not our concern. We merely desire to discover whether the rest of the Powers are agreed as to what shall be discussed and what not. There are still differences of opinion on this point to be settled. Will Russia accept the British contention that the whole Treaty must be submitted? Are all the Powers in agreement with the French demand that special questions, such as Tunis, Syria, the Holy Sepulchre, and especially Egypt, shall be excluded from the

discussions throughout? Is there unanimity about the admission of Greece and the consequent broadening of the basis of discussion? Other similar questions may arise. The Porte and Italy have so far made no utterance.

Prince Bismarck leaves it to you to suggest confidentially to Lord Derby, when a suitable opportunity offers, with regard to an alternative President, that from the British point of view it may be politically more advantageous to take account of Prince Gortchakoff's known great desire to close his career with the Presidency, if only temporarily, of a European Congress, and whether he does not think that the concession of a purely formal point of honour might turn the personal influence of the Russian Imperial Chancellor in a more favourable direction; whereas, if exercised in the opposite sense, it might all the easier become a disadvantage. The discomfort and the necessity for reserve involved in the Presidency would not be compensated by the fleeting political advantage to be gained from it.

## II. 230

STATEMENT BY LORD DERBY, *March 16th, 1878*

*Extract.*

Her Majesty's Government must distinctly understand, before they can enter into Congress, that every article in the Treaty between Russia and Turkey will be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers and what do not.

## II. 234

COUNT SHOVALOFF TO LORD DERBY, *March 19th, 1878*

. . . Prince Gortchakoff charges me to represent to you that the Treaty of Peace concluded between Russia and Turkey (the only one which exists, for we have no secret engagement) will be communicated to Her Majesty's Government in its entirety, and well before the assembly of the Congress; Her Majesty's Government, in like manner as those of the other Great Powers, reserve to themselves at the Congress their full liberty of appreciation and action. This same liberty, which she does not dispute to others, Russia claims for herself. Now, it would be to restrict it, if alone of all the Powers Russia contracted a preliminary engagement.

## II. 237

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, *March 22nd, 1878*

Your Excellency will have learnt from my reports and telegrams the state of negotiations regarding the Congress, and the

efforts made by Lord Derby and my Russian colleague to avoid breaking them off and to make the Congress possible. Those who, like myself, are following the negotiations closely cannot help being impatient. If Russia really desires the Congress, Prince Gortchakoff ought to handle the affair differently. The difference is one of principle, rather than of practice.

Since the British side admits that a majority decision by the Congress cannot in effect be binding, I really fail to see how the Russian '*liberté d'action*', which Prince Gortchakoff mentions in every despatch, every telegram, can possibly be disturbed. But it appears inevitable that the Congress will be called upon to examine the Treaty now to be submitted to it in the light of former Treaties sanctioned by the Powers, if it is to settle the Eastern Question. That is all that England demands. Prince Gortchakoff's pretension to submit for discussion only those points, calling in Russia's opinion, for alteration, in the former Treaties, is quite untenable.

Fear of the Press and of public opinion, so far as it exists in Russia, is hindering the Cabinet from agreeing to the British demand; there is a certain sensitiveness, which is being promoted to a point of honour, and it seems that the far from unfair demand is being refused, simply because it has been made a condition.

It cannot be judged here whether any other reasons are influencing the Russian Government.

As these negotiations are highly important and may decide between peace and war, I am keeping Your Excellency au courant as much as possible and beg to enclose Lord Derby's statement.

It depends on the Russian reply whether the Congress takes place at all. There is great excitement about it here, and if Russia wishes to avoid war with England, a conciliatory answer will have to be given by her. It is doubtful whether the Congress would actually prevent a war, but it is highly probable that war would follow, if it were not held.

Yesterday Sir Stafford Northcote announced in the House of Commons that it was most undesirable to force the Government by means of questions to make any declarations. In the House of Lords, however, Lord Derby seized the opportunity offered by a debate introduced by the '*enfant terrible*' of the Lords, Lord Stratheden and Campbell, to report the course of the negotiations and the policy of the Government, as your Excellency has gathered from my despatches.

I have just seen Lord Derby. He read to me the Note (enclosed) to Count Shouvaloff and said one was tempted to believe that the Russian Government did not desire the Congress, judging by her unwillingness to agree to the very moderate

British demands. Everyone was agreed that decisions by a majority could not be held binding ; but every unbiased party must admit that it was the function of the Congress to examine which parts of the Treaty, which after all was bound to form the basis of the Congress, involved changes in the earlier treaties.

Lord Derby returned to the question of the Presidency and said it was difficult to make any official or indeed public announcement on that subject. He urged strongly that, if Prince Bismarck were prevented from assuming it, Herr von Bülow should do so in his place. Prince Gortchakoff could not take offence on that account, for he had expressly announced here through Count Shouvaloff that he would refuse the Presidency, if it were offered to him. ' And besides,' added Lord Derby, ' this question has been still further aggravated by the nomination of General Ignatieff as Second Plenipotentiary, for the mistrust of Russia, which, as you know, is quite deep enough as it is, is coupled with the name of this diplomatist. A scrutiny of the Treaty demonstrates already that these questions of formalities will in practice present great difficulties.'

Next week I shall report in further detail the considerations called forth by the Treaty, which is published to-day in all the newspapers. To-day I will merely suggest that the multitude of committees, above all, by which important questions, such as frontiers, are openly discussed, causes dissatisfaction and irritation, and that the occupation of Bulgaria for two years is held to be especially dangerous. Many think that it merely means the postponement of the inevitable war for two years.

The above are the impressions of the moment, to which I shall refer again later.

Count Shouvaloff expects the text of the Treaty to-night and will report it officially to-morrow.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 21st, 1878.*

*Enclosure.*

Her Majesty's Government have attentively considered the Communication which you were authorised by Prince Gortchakoff to make to me on the 19th inst.

Her Majesty's Government cannot recede from the position already clearly defined by them, that they must distinctly understand before they can enter into Congress that every article in the Treaty between Russia and Turkey will be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the other Powers and what do not.

Her Majesty's Government are unable to accept the view now put forward by Prince Gortchakoff that the freedom of

opinion and action in Congress of Russia more than of any other Power would be restricted by this preliminary understanding.

Her Majesty's Government therefore desire to ask whether the Government of Russia are willing that the communication of the Treaty 'en entier' to the various Powers shall be treated as a placing of the Treaty before the Congress, in order that the whole Treaty, in its relation to existing Treaties, may be examined and considered by the Congress.

(Signed) DERBY.

## II. 242-3

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*March 27th, 1878*

### *Extract.*

The Russian Cabinet still upholds its claim to a veto on discussion of certain parts of the Treaty, whilst the British Ministers are so deeply committed to Parliament, as to make it impossible for them to recede, and thus the Congress is brought to nought.

Lord Derby is of opinion that now that the intentions and the motives underlying the actions of the Russian Cabinet are coming to light so clearly, there can be no peaceful outcome of the Congress, and that the differences it will give rise to may easily assume a more acute and personal character and be more likely to bring about a catastrophe than direct negotiations would. If meanwhile some understanding were arrived at, it would even so not preclude a Conference or a Congress being held.

In its present form the Peace Treaty cannot be considered as acceptable. There is no hope of England's consent to it nor of a sanction for the geographical and political conditions set up by it. Lord Derby in confidence characterised the proposed frontier for Bulgaria as quite absurd. It could hardly have been meant seriously, as it was justified neither geographically, ethnographically nor historically, and was setting up conditions, which in the long run neither England nor Austria would endure, and was most wantonly oppressive to the Greek element. . . .

The Greek element will, amongst many other subjects, become an apple of discord between Russia and England.

Here in London Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's suggestion is gaining ground more and more, namely, that out of Turkey in Europe several autonomous states shall be formed, and out of Bulgaria, as adumbrated by Russia, two states, a cis- and a trans-Balkan Bulgaria, having two rulers with the utmost possible measure of independence. It would very likely suit England and Austria better than Russia, that these two should become permanently hostile to each other, and should form a Greek and a Slav Bulgaria.



The whole of the above are still merely undigested notions, and unfortunately it seems less and less probable that a peaceable solution can possibly be discovered.

Lord Derby still believes in peace and constantly states that he is in agreement with his colleagues, who are all against war. I think Lord Derby is correct and that Lord Beaconsfield would gladly lay the spirits he has raised, and will at the decisive moment shrink from his responsibilities, for I do not credit him with the required genuine energy.

The present negotiations respecting the Peace Treaty offer plenty of material for friction, added to which is the serious danger created by the presence of the Fleet in the Sea of Marmora and of the Russian forces in the near neighbourhood of Constantinople. Moreover, Mr. Layard's personality (British Ambassador at Constantinople) by itself acts as an irritant in the present very strained situation.

Lord Derby, who is not very well to-day, preserves complete silence and he will not to-day announce the Cabinet's decision. He has returned no answer to my Russian colleague's enquiry, whether he may announce to his Government that England does not mean to favour the Congress.

Count Shouvaloff shares my opinion that the Congress is ruined, but Count Beust clings to the hope that at the last moment England will give way. Efforts are being made on the part of Austria to achieve this end (Note by the EMPEROR WILLIAM I: '*And not by Count Münster?*'), but I am doubtful of their success, as there is here for the moment considerable feeling against Austria.

*German Note.*

On March 28th, 1878, Lord Derby resigned from Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet. Lord Salisbury became Foreign Secretary in his place.

II. 244

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*March 28th, 1878*

Lord Derby's resignation was just now unexpected, especially as he was in agreement with his colleagues on the question of the Congress. When yesterday it was decided not to favour the Congress, Lord Beaconsfield announced in Cabinet that he had the Queen's permission to call up the Reserves. This is only legally possible 'in case of imminent national danger or of great emergency'. (Note by the EMPEROR WILLIAM I: '*So the die is cast?*') Lord Derby refused to admit this fact before England and Europe. He was outvoted and resigned. Lord Salisbury is his successor.

II. 245

BÜLOW TO LORD ODO RUSSELL, BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN,  
*March 30th, 1878*

Prince Bismarck desires me to inform your Lordship that Germany will not take part in the Conference without Great Britain, and that he cannot conceive how a Congress to discuss a revision of the International Law of Europe can take place failing the presence of one of the High Contracting Parties, namely Great Britain.

## CHAPTER VII

### WAR AVERTED BETWEEN RUSSIA AND ENGLAND

II. 249

COUNT MÜNSTER IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*March 29th, 1878*

Lord Derby's retirement, which was expected earlier, but not at this moment, has made a great sensation and is regarded as a declaration of war against Russia. In stirring times public opinion easily exaggerates. This is the case now.

Lord Derby's decision was the more surprising, since it was known that the Cabinet were fully agreed upon the Congress question, and that Lord Derby was less inclined than any of his colleagues to give in.

Lord Derby's position has been untenable for some time past. He has been violently and wantonly attacked by the more war-like section of his own party and by the Royal Family and its entourage. Attacks, both secret and open, have been made upon him in Parliament by members of his own party, and he has been in the anomalous position of receiving the support of the Liberal Opposition. Up till now party considerations have induced Lord Beaconsfield to cling to this wealthy and influential man, and for some time he believed he might lose, along with Lord Derby, a majority in the House of Commons. The present crisis and momentary war-scare have lessened this anxiety, and the Prime Minister holds that the safe moment has come for parting with a Minister, who is uncongenial to himself, without risking any Party changes.

It is probable, however, that it will prove a severe blow to the Tory Party, and that later on Lord Derby may join the Whigs. . . .

I beg to enclose the two Laws on which Lord Beaconsfield based his action.

The present regulation is of no great intrinsic importance, for it provides for calling up a Reserve of about 12,000 men of the regular Army, and 26,000 men of the Militia. Its object is to

mobilise and prepare for war the Second Corps and to prepare for mobilising the Third Corps.

All preparations for the embarkation of the First Corps are being energetically pushed forward. Three large transports were purchased yesterday, and, according to my information, a contract for over twenty large steam-ships is to be concluded to-day.

The destination of the Expeditionary Force still remains to be learned, and I do not think that a final decision on this point has yet been arrived at.

It all now depends on the attitude of Russia, and there is great cause for anxiety lest the news of Lord Derby's resignation, combined with the Mobilisation Order, may lead to demonstrations by the Russian forces in the neighbourhood of Constantinople or Gallipoli.

The Anglo-Russian situation may be compared to two kegs of gunpowder and a number of children (the Turks) and a very mischievous urchin (Mr. Layard) playing with a box of matches close to them.

I may safely assume that Lord Salisbury will be Lord Derby's successor. Lord Lyons was much spoken of, and I think Lord Beaconsfield and the real old Tories would have preferred him. But he is no speaker, and is quite unknown in Parliament. Opinions are much divided and contradictory as to his talents as a statesman.

Lord Salisbury is unquestionably shrewd and is particularly able in debate. He is known to Prince Bismarck and yourself. He has changed greatly since the Conferences (1876), and when General Ignatieff speaks of 'ami Salisbury', I should surmise that the friendship is a one-sided one. I look forward with pleasure to my dealings with him, and although I have no reason to write otherwise than with gratitude of Lord Derby's constant amiability, I will say that it was not easy to conquer the mistrust which is his overwhelming characteristic. . . .

Lord Derby said to me, 'If Lord Beaconsfield indicated that the mobilisation was the sole cause of his (Lord D.'s) resignation, this was incorrect, for there were for him other and weightier reasons. He must for the present, out of regard for his former colleagues, say no more.' I was sure, however, that the demand for a heavy credit, which Lord Beaconsfield intends making, had something to do with it. I also heard vaguely of a protest against the Peace of San Stefano. . . .

Yesterday at dinner in Lord Chancellor Cairns' house I met Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. Lord Beaconsfield was in excellent mood and in great form. He spoke of the state of isolation as that in which England was ever at her strongest.

He also made a special point of the fact that Lord Derby's resignation and the mobilisation of the forces in no sense signified war. He hoped, on the contrary, to prevent it by an energetic course of action. After the last reply by Russia there could be no more thought of a Congress; the recent Cabinet crisis, however, had prevented him making an official communication of this either to Russia or the other Powers. This could only be done when the new Foreign Minister had been appointed and had assumed office. . . .

## II. 257

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, *April 2nd, 1878*

*Very confidential.*

Lord Salisbury has chosen a dangerous moment for taking over the Foreign Office and, as far as I know him, would not have done so, if he were not prepared to go to war.

The Cabinet situation has undergone a remarkable change. Lord Beaconsfield is at the moment inclined for peace and wishes to shift the responsibility for war on to his Foreign Secretary. Lord Derby refused to shoulder it, and Lord Salisbury is prepared to do so, if he sees that no other course is possible.

What the next step of the Government will be cannot be predicted with certainty. Hence the seriousness of the situation, since war still depends on mere chance.

The Royal Message, calling up the Reserves, has just been presented to Parliament. Preparations for war are being actively made, all question of expense being ignored.

Lord Salisbury's instincts are purely pro-Christian and therefore anti-Turkish. Hence the war will assume a different aspect, for he would prefer, if it were possible, not to restore the Turkish Empire, and so would not willingly enter into an alliance with the Turks, whom he despises. He is one of the very few British statesmen who would be ready to divide the spoil with Russia, a course which would be impossible if England were to make common cause with Turkey. He could not induce his fellow-countrymen to follow him without going to war, and possibly he would not object to seeing Russia force Turkey into an unfriendly attitude towards England, seeing that Turkey could never become an active and complacent ally to Russia.

Into this remarkable situation England has been driven through her weak policy of conditional neutrality and the assertion of the purely selfish view of her own interests. War, if it comes, will have been entered into without any predetermined objective, but merely for the establishment of power and of what is involved by 'prestige', a word existing only in the French language.

## WAR AVERTED BETWEEN RUSSIA AND ENGLAND) 97

II. 258

*The same, April 2nd, 1878*

*Very confidential.*

My Russian colleague has lost greatly through the retirement of Lord Derby. He exercised a most remarkable influence over this statesman, who is so suspicious in other directions. Count Shouvaloff's intimacy with Lord and Lady Derby has given cause to much gossip, and has been exploited in a very ugly fashion by the war party.

Nevertheless, even Lord Beaconsfield, who bears no good will to Count Shouvaloff, admits that the Count has spared no effort, either here or at St. Petersburg, to preserve the peace between England and Russia.

Therefore a private telegram yesterday from St. Petersburg which announced that Prince Gortchakoff was to retire, and that Count Shouvaloff was to take his place, caused much rejoicing amongst those who desire the preservation of peace. I consider this to be the sole means for maintaining peace, for Count Shouvaloff is one of the few Russians who are aware of the injury which a war between England and Russia would inflict. Also he knows England well and puts a high value on her financial and even her military strength. It appears that yesterday's news is incorrect, but that there is an important Party at St. Petersburg in the Court itself, which is now working strongly to recall Count Shouvaloff to St. Petersburg, in order to get him into the Foreign Office. This I learn from private letters and from announcements coming by private channels from there. Not only for this reason, which his friends think highly probable, but also because he considers war almost inevitable, Count Shouvaloff has made arrangements for a speedy departure, and has dismissed most of his household. He believes that the British Circular Despatch (of April 1st, 1878)<sup>1</sup> may make a very bad impression in St. Petersburg and perhaps lead to the rupture of diplomatic relations. Here also, as far as I can see, it has produced the same impression, and several higher officers have told me that on reading it, they ordered their Field kit.

[Early in April, 1878, Prince Bismarck seems to have decided that the moment had arrived for him to justify his claim, made in his speech of February 19th, to be 'the honest broker, who pushes through the business'.]

II. 262

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON,

*April 9th, 1878*

*Telegram.*

Our gracious Master, the Emperor, guided by the conviction

<sup>1</sup> Text in *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. 69, p. 807. See also *Life of Lord Salisbury*, Vol. II, p. 226.

that neither Russia nor England regard war as an unavoidable necessity, does not despair that peace can be maintained between these two Powers, both of them friendly to Germany. This condition, which is so essential for Europe, appears to His Majesty at the moment to be endangered more by the actual position of the armed forces of both Powers than by the political situation of the Turkish Question. The close neighbourhood of the British Fleet and the Russian Army before Constantinople might through some unforeseen event lead to a conflict, which is neither desired nor envisaged by either Power, but which might be fatal to the peace of both and to the tranquillity of Europe.

Being convinced of this, we venture to enquire confidentially of Her Majesty's Cabinet, whether it would be inclined to make use of our friendly mediation, in order to bring about an agreement regarding the measures, whereby the distance between the forces of both Powers may be substantially increased.

We suggest an agreement somewhat in the following form, but, if the idea finds any echo in Lord Salisbury's mind, we shall gladly fall in with and promote any proposal for alteration or any request for elucidation :—

'The British Fleet to leave Constantinople and to re-pass the Dardanelles ;—the Russian forces to retire from the Bosphorus to a distance equivalent to the time required to reinstate the British Fleet in its present position.' . . .

I am despatching a similar recommendation to our Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

[The two Powers at once accepted the mediation of Prince Bismarck. The mutual distrust was, however, still deep enough to lead to a drawn-out discussion concerning the number of days required to bring the British Fleet and the Russian Army back to their respective positions in front of Constantinople, in case the negotiations were to break down. England was also insistent that the Russians should see to it that the Turks did not occupy the Neutral Zone created by the retirement of the Russians.]

## II. 289

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 20th, 1878*

. . . Lord Salisbury desires and has repeatedly declared that the proposals concerning the interval of time for giving notice (*Kündigungsfist*) and the manner of advancing upon Constantinople (*Vorsprung*) should be made here by Your Serene Highness and not by St. Petersburg. He is obliged to take account of the deeply rooted distrust here (of Russia).

The idea for the advance and the equalisation of the time allowed has been well received in the Cabinet. . . . It is accepted here and seems to me also fairly to meet the case, that, supposing six days are allowed for the Army and two days for the Fleet,

four days' start would be granted to the Russian troops to regain the positions they had given up, and the Fleet would not sail till the morning of the fifth day ; or—the other way round—the Fleet would wait for four days after the troops had begun their retirement, before sailing, and would engage to sail straight to Besika Bay. (Note by PRINCE BISMARCK : '*Russia will desire a simultaneous withdrawal from Constantinople.*') In this way distrust would best be allayed, and the position of the British Cabinet made easier regarding the badly mismanaged and indefensible question of the Fleet.

Concerning the second question, that of the meeting of the Congress, or rather, the resumption of negotiations, Lord Salisbury is decidedly against a Congress being held, until agreement upon certain leading points has been obtained by direct negotiations. (BISMARCK : '*Has much in its favour. Cf. third paragraph from end.*')

He would, as he says, best prefer to conduct the negotiations with the assistance of friendly counsel from the Imperial Government. (BISMARCK : '*We could scarcely refuse this, if both desire it. But they must conduct the actual negotiations with one another ; otherwise there will be confusion owing to the crossing of proposals.*') I have maintained a very reserved attitude and emphasised the point that our mediation only concerns the removal of the inflammatory material at Constantinople.

As I mentioned in my despatch of April 17th, 1878, the obstacle to an understanding lies in Asia.

[The reference is to British anxiety regarding the extension of Russian power in Asia. Lord Salisbury had said that England would rather see Batum in Russian hands, than Kars and positions which dominated Armenia.]

What on broad lines is desired here, is an Asiatic Turkey with Constantinople and an enlarged city district, a small province of Constantinople,—autonomous Christian states and a larger Greece, able to stand by itself. England would certainly oppose Russian influence preponderating in Asia Minor and Syria.

According to old traditions, Kars is a point which has played an important part in India, and with Bajazid on one side and the Caspian on the other Persia would lie completely under the Russian sphere of influence.

Lord Salisbury has considerably altered his ideas regarding the effect produced in India by the Eastern complications.

[On April 30th a contingent of Indian troops sailed from Bombay for Malta, to be in readiness, if required.]

The motives for the despatch of Indian troops to Europe just now are political rather than military, and are calculated to



produce a deep impression on India. The brigade, consisting of two regiments of cavalry and five specially selected regiments of infantry, is to form a division with a brigade of British troops. It will, in case a military demonstration is needed, be landed on Gallipoli or the coast of Asia. Further divisions are being equipped in India, and military and naval preparations are being pushed forward energetically. Lord Salisbury led the conversation on to the subject of Egypt. He said that the anxiety (concerning Asia and India) would certainly be somewhat allayed, if that country were administered by England. He would ever remember the very interesting conversation he had had with Your Serene Highness.

Two considerations were weighing with his colleagues against the acquisition of Egypt.

They feared the financial complications and sacrifices likely to be involved, and also, a long period of enmity with France. I answered that I considered both these anxieties to be exaggerated. Egypt was sure to pay financially, so long as she was wisely administered by Englishmen and under British control; I was, moreover, convinced that the financial world of France, which has great influence over the Government in Paris, would soon calm down, and that the prospect of profits would weigh heavier than all historical and Napoleonic memories put together.

France's objective is Tunis, as it is considered essential to the consolidation of her power in Algeria. "It is the ancient Carthage and the marvellous harbour of Cape Bona. This will be a much lesser cause of anxiety for England than for Italy. At present France would not go to war for the sake of Egypt. Whether it may not happen later 'on, when the thoughts of war against Germany will have passed away, and the French Army is thirsting for fresh feats of arms, is another question.

Lord Salisbury is very accessible to all ideas of this kind and said that, if it came to war, England would be obliged to take up her part to the full. Without war it would be difficult to carry through the business. Lord Salisbury is without doubt quite prepared to go to war.

Lord Salisbury, whom I saw recently, said to me that Austria was pressing hard for the Congress, but that his answer was that it was necessary first of all to obtain a certain measure of agreement on the principal points. A Congress breaking up with nothing accomplished was far worse than no Congress at all. Austria, on the other hand, has but little confidence in the British Cabinet.

The order prohibiting the export of torpedoes and all craft and machinery connected with them has been issued in conse-

quence of the large commissions for them lodged here by Russian and American firms. The French Government has ten large torpedo-boats here. The British Government offered to buy them of her, but the deal was broken off, and now the affair is going forward by itself.

Lord Salisbury begged me to lay stress on the fact that these were precautionary measures, long since decided on, and not to describe them as indicating a more bellicose tendency.

## II. 292

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN MINISTER,  
*April 29th, 1878*

### *Cipher telegram.*

Now at last Count Shouvaloff has received instructions to deal direct with Lord Salisbury, but he hopes that the Imperial Government will not withdraw entirely from the negotiations.

Lord Salisbury repeats this request and fears that without our co-operation there will be no agreement. He gave me his opinion on the compact, but, since the Ministers are out of town, he wishes not to make the real proposal until Wednesday. He requests me to communicate his views to the Chancellor, as follows :—

As regards Constantinople, he would accept a four days' interval, and would even concede an extra day, if his proposals regarding Gallipoli are accepted.

If four days are fixed upon, the British Fleet shall sail direct for Besika Bay four days after the Russian troops start their march.

On learning that this is agreed to the British Fleet shall sail at once to the Straits of Gallipoli and anchor there. It shall not sail into the Sea of Marmora until the fourth day.

Whilst in the Straits of Gallipoli the British Fleet will threaten no Russian position, but will require the assurance of a free passage.

I think that no better conditions can be obtained here.

A report in the papers that Russia has not only insisted on Turkey's respecting the neutral zone, but has also added the withdrawal of troops to the condition of the surrender of the Fortresses of Shumla, Varna and Batum, has made a bad impression here, and Lord Salisbury says that if it is true, he will regard the negotiations as broken off. He has had no official confirmation of it and hopes that Russia will not make agreement impossible by dragging in such questions.

## II. 293

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, *May 2nd, 1878**Extract.*

My Russian colleague is making efforts to ascertain in his conversations with Lord Salisbury the frontier, which the British Cabinet was determined should be drawn in connection with the alterations and acquisitions envisaged by the Treaty of San Stefano. He has only discovered so far that England is quite determined not to permit a Bulgaria reaching to the Aegean and the Sea of Marmora, and he is convinced they will not give way about Kars. ✓ He shares my impression that there are greater difficulties to be surmounted in connection with the acquisitions in Asia than in Europe.

[Prince Bismarck's one preoccupation now was 'to secure the meeting of the Congress. Then all controversial questions still outstanding could be raised at it.' (May 25th, 1878.)]

## II. 317

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, *May 25th, 1878*

. . . England is just now feeling a great distrust of Austria. The former inclination to form an alliance with Austria has given place to the wish to come to an understanding with Russia, unhampered by Austria. There are several differences of outlook apart from the personal grounds. Austria has lately shown a hostile attitude towards Greece and opposed the British point of view. Also, England regards Austrian intentions regarding Montenegro as neither fair nor statesmanlike. It is held here that these hardy mountaineers should be left at peace to develop themselves commercially, given that it is desired that brigandage be suppressed and the country brought to a higher level of civilisation. Besides this, Lord Salisbury complains that, whereas England honourably upheld Austrian interests in the matter of the Bulgarian boundary, Austria seemed in no way inclined to support the wishes of England regarding the Boundary question in Asia.

I reassured Lord Salisbury who expressed himself very bitterly against Austria, and attempted to convince him that it was in England's interests to strive for a settlement of the Eastern Question, such as should take account of Austria's very important interests in those regions.

Lord Salisbury admitted this and is prepared to support the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. He has instructed Mr. Layard to this effect.

England's refusal to grant Austria's request to support her annexation of Bosnia was based on the principle of respect for

the sovereignty of Turkey, and she had declared that, although she feels no objection to the fact itself, she would lend no hand towards its realisation. Now the latest Austrian communications had made no more mention of annexation, but merely of occupation, and to this Lord Salisbury had no objection. . . .

II. 320

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *May 27th, 1878*

*Extract.*

I feel bound to remark and admit with gratitude that both parties have shown very great confidence in me, and both Lord Salisbury and Count Shouvaloff have all the time discussed each detail of the negotiations with me. I believe that I have interpreted your Serene Highness's intentions correctly, in that I have used every effort to promote concord and mutual understanding.

[There were delays on the part of Russia partly occasioned by Prince Gortchakoff's illness. Count Shouvaloff visited him in St. Petersburg and 'found him in bed in a small room with neither light nor air. In spite of all persuasion he had refused to leave it for weeks. He was irritable after nights of sleeplessness and unfit to deal with affairs, and at the same time determined not to let them out of his hands' (May 10th, 1878).

The preliminary agreement between England and Russia was finally signed on June 1st, and the Powers were invited to meet at Berlin on June 13th.]

II. 329-30

COUNT MÜNSTER TO BÜLOW, *June 3rd, 1878*

I received at Hatfield Your Excellency's telegram authorising me to invite to the Congress for the 13th. It was being decyphered in my room, when Major von Panwitz rushed in with a telegram for the Crown Prince with a request from the Postal authorities that I should open it, since an attempt on the life of our beloved Emperor had been made.

This was General Albedyll's first telegram.

Their Imperial Highnesses had driven with Lord and Lady Salisbury and the rest of the party to Panshanger, the seat of Lord Cowper, 5 miles off. I provided Panwitz with a horse at once and made all preparations for the departure of their Imperial Highnesses for Germany. They returned to Hatfield at 5.30, and we reached London by special train at 6.15. At 8.15 we travelled to Dover, where I saw their Imperial Highnesses on board.

The Crown Prince and Princess were deeply shocked.

The sympathy felt by all Germans and Englishmen and by the Diplomatic Corps is indescribable. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield, who was also at Hatfield, said to me he

was very thankful that the Congress had been put off till the 13th. He was looking forward to the journey to Berlin, but wished to allow 5 or 6 days for it, as he was in poor health.

Lord Beaconsfield's decision to attend the Congress causes much surprise. It is held to be a sign that he expects the Congress to be a success, and is unwilling to allow Lord Salisbury the full credit for it. Lord Salisbury is inclined to smile at this and thinks Lord Beaconsfield will play but a nominal part there and only remain a short time. . . .

## II. 331

VON SCHWEINTZ, AMBASSADOR IN ST. PETERSBURG, TO BÜLOW,  
*June 4th, 1878*

### *Extract.*

The Prince sat with a file on his lap, which contained the most recently received telegrams. He read them all to me, beginning with the latest and most important, that of Count Shouvaloff, dated June 2nd. It read: 'Après de longs efforts j'ai obtenu de Lord Salisbury que l'Angleterre accepte le Congrès sans insister sur la retraite des troupes devant Constantinople; Lord Beaconsfield et Lord Salisbury iront à Berlin; je pars ce soir.'

Prince Gortchakoff described Lord Beaconsfield's coming as significant and desirable, and said: 'There is one who need have no arrière-pensées and it would have been well for Russia to have had someone like him to send to the Congress. Myself. My feet are still swollen and painful, but perhaps I may be able to travel. I think my presence would be useful at the Congress, for it is well known that I have never told an untruth. (PRINCE BISMARCK, in the margin—" / ") We are witnessing one of the most critical moments in history.' It would have been cruel to contradict the Prince. It is clear that he looked forward to appearing on the same stage as Prince Bismarck and Disraeli and then to retiring with a 'nunc plaudite'. Those, who for years have controlled the Prince with their pens and, now that he is failing, mock at him with their tongues, suggest that he wishes to finish with a reputation for patriotism, and, after refusing certain unpopular concessions, to resign at the right moment. . . .

Prince Gortchakoff said that the only disquieting news was from the Ambassador in Constantinople, whose attitude finds full support with Prince Gortchakoff. Prince Lobanoff describes conditions there as being very insecure, and Mr. Layard's activities continuously hostile. He attaches some importance to an article in the *Levant Herald*, the organ of Murad V (the Sultan) and Midhat Pacha (Grand Vizier).

At the close of the conversation, the first which the Prince had held with any foreigner for weeks, he begged me to say or write nothing of his wish to attend the Congress in Berlin, until the Emperor, who was about to honour him with a visit, should have made his decision.

## II. 334

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 10th, 1878*

Lord Beaconsfield left London on Saturday. . . . According to Lord Salisbury, he means to stay in Berlin about a week and to return here, soon after the House of Lords meets. . . . (He did not arrive in London until July 16th.) Lord Salisbury was most anxious that Lord Beaconsfield should undertake the journey. He knows well that the concessions, that England has made to Russia, and which will have to be ratified and published at the Congress, will surely lead to strong attacks on the Government by members of its own party, and he is unwilling to shoulder the responsibility alone.

Lord Salisbury said to me: 'I am very glad that Lord Beaconsfield is going to meet Prince Bismarck. He will learn a few facts about the Eastern Question, which have up till now never been told him. Prince Bismarck will gain a great influence over him, and that is my wish.'

Your Highness will find it very difficult to keep up a serious conversation with this very vain man, who is already showing the weakness of age. At the same time he frequently expresses witty and illuminating ideas, but fails in the higher conception—moral grip.

His Private Secretary, Mr. Montagu Corry, is devoted to his Chief. He is a very pleasant man, but is vain, and spoilt by Society. He has great influence with Lord Beaconsfield. He uses every bit of gossip to retain his influence with his aged Chief, and is therefore to be handled with great caution.

Lord Beaconsfield brings two young and brilliant officials with him: Mr. Algernon Turner and Mr. Austin Lee.

Lord Salisbury is known to Your Highness. His experience at Constantinople and during late years has been of the greatest use to him. Before long he will be Prime Minister, and a leading figure in England. He has chosen two of the most brilliant Clerks in the Foreign Office as members of his Staff: Mr. Currie and Mr. Hertslet. Mr. Hertslet is well-known as the author of an excellent work on the Treaties of the XIX Century.

I hear, also, that General Sir Lintorn Simmons, who spent a long time at Constantinople, has received orders to go to Berlin and form part of the Special Mission. . . .

*German Note.*

The Berlin Congress sat from June 13th to July 13th, 1878.

The course of the Congress and its results are given in the 20 Protocols, printed by de Martens, *Nouveau Recueil Général des Traités*, 2nd Series, Vol. III, p. 276 seq.; also in the *Staatsarchiv*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 107 seq. The decisions of the Congress are to be found there also. In spite of the fact that the Congress sat in Berlin and of the leading part played by prominent German statesmen in negotiations and oral discussions, scarcely any of the documents of the Congress are to be found in the Foreign Office. Thus it is that many questions are still not cleared up; e.g. the often asked question (which is answered in the affirmative by Hanotaux in his *History of Contemporary France*, III, 2 (Germ. translation)) whether Bismarck knew of the Anglo-Turkish Convention of June 4th from the first. It was only communicated by Lord Salisbury on July 7th, and it does not appear among the German Records. Later utterances by the Prince on his assiduity as mediator at the Congress make up but little for the jejuneness of the German documents on the Congress.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GERMANY'S ESTRANGEMENT FROM RUSSIA

#### CENTRAL EUROPEAN ALLIANCES

##### I. THE AUSTRO-GERMAN ALLIANCE

✓ [After the conclusion of the Conference of Berlin, the relations between Germany and Russia became steadily worse. The Russian Government professed indignation at the fact that the Germans did not give them the support which they claimed they had the right to expect in the negotiations which took place regarding the execution of the Treaty. This estrangement went so far as to arouse in Bismarck serious apprehension that he might soon find himself engaged in a war with Russia. In consequence of this he arranged with Count Andrassy in 1879 the famous Austro-German Alliance, which is a turning-point in the diplomatic history of Europe.]

##### III. 7-8

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO RADOWITZ OF THE GERMAN  
FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 9th, 1879*

Prince Bismarck has directed me to write to you, as follows: I beg you to speak cautiously and confidentially to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in the sense, that we undertook the rôle of mediators at the Congress very willingly, because we believed that we could render a service to Russia and give expression to the friendship of the two Monarchs. When this failed, contrary to our expectation, and when unfortunately the Russian Government, and also the Press and public opinion of Russia, interpreted in an opposite sense our behaviour at the Congress, we were forced to adopt an attitude of cautious reserve. The failure of our efforts to consolidate our relations with Russia and the threatening expressions used against us by the Russian Press, and even by the Government Organs, obliged us to use more caution in our relations with other Powers than we had used formerly, when we were assured of Russia's friendship. I cannot call to mind that, either before or during the Congress we failed to support any single desire, which Russia officially brought to our knowledge. The Minutes of the Congress show that



Germany supported Russia on every question, even when both were in a minority.

Count Shouvaloff reported consistently that it was only my mediation with Lord Beaconsfield and my threats to retire from the Congress, that brought about England's admission of Russia's claim to Batoum, the withdrawal of the British demand to preserve a strip of territory for Turkey to the North of the Balkans, the extension of the Bulgarian frontier to beyond Sofia. Had Russia wished to demand more than this, at the risk of breaking up the Congress, she should have communicated it to us, and we might possibly have supported her. We could not be expected to make demands for Russia, which Russia was not making for herself. There has never been such an example at a Congress of a Great Power so unreservedly placing itself at the disposal of another. The result has been, not even a friendly acknowledgment, but an attitude adopted by Russia towards us, which forces us to think of the future and of how to avoid rousing the enmity of other nations on questions in which Germany is not interested. We deplore the state of affairs—but it obliges me to think whether I can bear the responsibility to my Emperor for a policy, by which we are debarred from turning to any Power except Russia, and by which our complete isolation in the future will depend on the will of Russia alone. Until the Congress, I had no fear of this possibility, as I was relying firmly on the Emperor Alexander. But the present attitude of Russia forces me to reckon thus anxiously with the future.

I beg you to speak to M. d'Arapoff in this sense, without referring to myself or mentioning that you are directed officially to do so, and to write to Herr von Schweinitz for his guidance. He naturally will not refer to it when answering, but simply keep silence, and only if obliged to, will he give forth these ideas, as being those to which he supposes we agree.

[Thus the foundation was laid for the Treaty between Germany and Austria, which was eventually signed on October 7th, 1879. With the inclusion of Italy in 1882, it became known as the Triple Alliance.]

### III. 127-8

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, VIENNA, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
November 6th, 1879

*Very confidential.*

To-day . . . Baron Haymerle (Austrian Foreign Minister) read to me a despatch from Count Karolyi, (Austrian Ambassador in London) dealing with the way in which Lord Salisbury had received his report of the Vienna conversations.

The British Minister expressed complete satisfaction on the

subject of his report, which was of the greatest importance to British policy, as pursued hitherto.

His question whether there was no written engagement between the two Governments was answered evasively by Count Karolyi, who said the British Cabinet might rest assured that the understanding between the two Governments was a very genuine one, and that, in the deplorable event of an attack by Russia on either of them, its genuineness would become evident.

Lord Salisbury promised to keep it secret, but he asked whether other Powers as well had not been similarly approached by Austria-Hungary. On the Ambassador's denying this, the Minister declared that he had no doubt that Russia had even so full knowledge of it.

Baron Haymerle mentioned also an article which had recently appeared in the *Agence Russe*, which is known to contemplate Russia's agreement with the principles of Germany and Austria-Hungary. His idea is that this conception has been thrown out by Russia, as a hint to England that Russia might easily come to an understanding again with us and Austria.

Lord Salisbury, he continued, was very suspicious. It might therefore be advisable to furnish him with further proofs of the intentions of the two Allies, in order still more to enlist his future co-operation. (BISMARCK: '*I have no hesitation. Austria demanded the secrecy.*') )

Baron Haymerle wishes no proposals to be made. He considered that we must first of all await the impression that the Memorandum will make upon the Emperor Alexander and the Russian Cabinet. It may then be worth consideration whether England's suspicions of a return to our joint support of Russia's Eastern policy should not be combated by a rather clearer statement to the Cabinet at St. James's of our support of British policy in the East. (BISMARCK: '*What is this? We have no call to be drawn into negotiations with Russia on this account.*') ) A similar idea had been discussed at Gastein between Your Excellency and Count Andrassy, but no decisive formula had been found.

In this connection also the Minister contemplates the possibility of the fall of the present French Cabinet, which, according to his information, is again very seriously threatened. If M. Waddington falls, it must be expected that some Cabinet would replace it, which, like MM. Freycinet, Fournier or someone else of the same way of thinking, might lead the French State once again on the path of adventure. England was not afraid of such an eventuality, which might be most unwelcome to Germany; (BISMARCK: '*Nor do we fear it.*') ) hence his wish to arrange matters, so that the friendship between England and France should not become too

intimate. The British Cabinet would prefer to reckon on German and Austrian support in the East. (BISMARCK: '*To what end? Our relations with Austria are purely defensive, and we must not let ourselves be harnessed to any aggressive plans of England's. Even if Austria did not reduce her Army, one does not wage a war with Russia merely pour les beaux yeux of England.*') rather than on the uncertain help of France, which the English could, however, always assure to themselves. (BISMARCK: '*This must not be allowed.*')

### III. 129

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, BERLIN,  
November 10th, 1879

Lord Salisbury's question, whether there was no written engagement, is an instance of the tactlessness, only to be explained by the extraordinarily faulty training, so often observable in Englishmen even of the highest rank. I make this remark in a purely academic sense, since the demand for secrecy came not from us, but from Austria. . . .

My freedom from objection, assuming that the Emperor also is in agreement, to giving fuller information to England, depends on the question,—which has no connection whatever with the one put by Baron Haymerle—whether we ought in more definite terms to promise our support for British policy in the East. It is not the fact that a similar idea was discussed at Gastein between Count Andrassy and myself. We merely considered the maintenance of a defensive peace, designed to free both Empires from the fear of attacks by Russia, but certainly not to support anyone's Eastern policy. Our sympathy with British policy will naturally grow in proportion as England demonstrates her desire for peace, and also her view of Russian policy as endangering the peace of Europe; but to tack this sympathy on to our defensive Alliance would risk involving the Alliance in an aggressive coalition, to benefit the policy of Mr. Layard and other hotheads. . . . When Russia was threatening us, I took measures, in order to provide for the event of our deciding not to support Russian policy on all points, to sound the Cabinet of St. James's in confidence,<sup>1</sup> to ascertain whether we could count on immediate and material support from England, in case our anti-Russian attitude on questions, of no objective interest for Germany, might draw us into war with Russia. The answer was not so plainly reassuring, that I could have ventured to act on the strength of it, if the danger were to become more imminent. It was more in the nature of an assurance that in

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury's 'Life', II, 367-9.

that case France would not attack us. My reply was that, even without the addition of France, a war with Russia, even though with God's help not absolutely fatal to us, would nevertheless always be a most undesirable possibility, which Germany could not take upon herself for any interests except her own.

I should consider it very imprudent to hand over a blank cheque for the support of British policy in the East, before we know what it involves. There must have been some foundation of fact in the coup de tête, lately ascribed to Mr. Layard (British Ambassador at Constantinople, who had at the end of October threatened the Porte with aggressive action by the British Fleet, if the persecution of Christians in the Asiatic Provinces did not cease, and if England was not permitted to take a hand in the carrying out of reforms there), and we have no certainty that such impassioned politicians will always be held in check by London. I am convinced that Austria desires peace just as fervently as we do, and that she has as little cause as ourselves to encourage the war fever, either in England or Russia. I should not regard it as useful just now to discourage the present friendly feeling between England and France. It provides the best means of keeping French policy in a peaceful channel, whilst any conceivable coolness between England and France might contribute materially to the fall of the Waddington Ministry. This, moreover, according to my information, stands more firmly at present than for some time past and is gaining adherents owing to its bolder attitude in its internal policy. Baron Haymerle may recollect that the wish to maintain the friendship between England and France, and the Waddington Ministry in power, formed one of the chief arguments of Count Andrassy, who used them to oppose my suggestion of binding the two Empires in a simple defensive Alliance against all comers. I had the greatest difficulty in making this argument acceptable to the Emperor, and for my own part, I cannot so easily abandon the hope of maintaining M. Waddington in power. I believe that we have no reason to fear that the Anglo-French friendship will become too intimate. It might become considerably more so than it is, and only so far affect the peace of Europe as to cause the two Western Powers to exert a mutual check on entering into risky ventures and to keep each other in the paths of peace. I am ready to believe that England will find an alliance with Germany and Austro-Hungary more profitable than one with France. There may be combinations of Powers (*Konstellationen*), in which the sense of peace and continuity is actually realised; in this sense it will be useful to keep France, as long as it is possible, free from the feeling that she has no alternative between isolation in Europe and an alliance with Russia.

I should consider it a mistaken policy for Austria to agree to support British policy in the East, before the aims of that policy are clearly formulated, and unless England associates herself with the interests of Austria in Italy more closely than she has done hitherto. . . .

It will not be suitable to speak in Vienna in the foregoing sense before Prince Reuss's return. The statement of my views is for the use of the Prince only in addressing the Emperor,—and also in the event of the question being raised by England.

I can reserve further explanations for conversations by word of mouth.

### III. 134

PRINCE BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
*January 29th, 1880*

*Confidential.*

The conversation reported by you on January 15th leads again to the two questions raised by Baron Haymerle on November 6th, [Cf. p. 103]—that of making a fuller communication in London of the Vienna Agreement, and whether the intention of Germany and Austria-Hungary to support British policy in the East should be more definitely expressed. As I showed in my Memorandum of November 10th, these two questions contain no interest for us. You will remember that in the draft despatch to Count Karolyi, on which the latter based his statement to Lord Salisbury, it was said that it had been laid down at Gastein, as an express intention of the Entente, that both Governments should endeavour to obtain England's agreement and *support* for their programme.

It is true that Baron Haymerle readily agreed with the word 'support' as used by me, but the idea, which the word conveyed to him of going deeper into an understanding with England, than we at Gastein and Vienna intended, has become familiar to him; only that now the support of our programme by England is coming to mean German and Austrian support for the policy of Great Britain.

In the event of a conflict, England will never be forced to fight for her existence, however extensive the interests which she may be defending, and the advantages which a successful issue may bring to her. We hope and desire to remain at peace with Russia; but if Russia makes this impossible by attacking us or Austria, there will follow a struggle, accompanied by very serious consequences, with Russia alone or else with Russia in alliance with France and Italy, and with no promise of any prizes worth consideration, even if we are victorious. We are increasing

our military strength and are gratified to see that Austria is at any rate not diminishing hers. But, we have nothing to gain by a conflict with Russia, and must therefore work to avoid one, and only under compulsion must we tread a path, whose ultimate end is a break with Russia. With this policy in view it would be undesirable to express ourselves in Constantinople as more English than Russian in sympathy. An opposite policy is rendered impossible for us owing to the need of nursing our relations with England, a need increased by the fact that Austrian and British interests lie near together. Thus we must adopt an impartial attitude at Constantinople. So that it is neither advisable for us to offer to the British Government, as suggested by Baron Haymerle on November 6th, rather more definite support for its Eastern policy, nor, as your Report of January 15th describes it, to show by the attitude of both our representatives that in that direction we sympathise with English interests, rather than with Russian, and thus principally by our attitude, and not by any definite pronouncement, take up an anti-Russian position. It would also, perhaps, suit Austria's interests better to avoid any demonstration of sympathy, and only to keep company with England, whenever she had real reasons for doing so, thus holding England on a tether; for one is never sure that England will follow any lead of Austria's. . . .

For me there is no doubt, that for Austria a break with Russia would mean a break with Italy, who would seize that opportunity for an attempt to annex Austrian territory. How England would behave in such an event, whether she would use her influence to keep Italy in check, cannot be foreseen for any length of time with any certainty, owing to the preponderance so easily assumed in England by domestic over foreign politics. Our reports from London inform us that the Russians last summer sounded the feeling, not only in France, but also in Italy, to discover whether they could count on support in case of a war, and that Italy only refused after the enquiry was discouraged in France, and rebuffed with threats in England.

## II. THE THREE-EMPERORS' ALLIANCE

In 1881 a change again took place in the general diplomatic situation, and Bismarck was able to establish a formal agreement (the Three-Emperors' Alliance) with Austria and Russia. In these negotiations the British Government had of course no concern, but it is important to note that at the request of Russia, there was inserted in the agreement a clause, No. 3, by which the three Powers agreed to defend the Straits against any attempt of another Power to force a passage through them in contravention of the terms of the Treaty of Paris. This clause was inserted in consequence of a declaration made by Lord Salisbury at the Conference of Berlin on July 11th, 1878 (see German Note on p. 168 of Vol. III of the *Grosse Politik*), which ran as follows: 'Considérant que le Traité de

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Berlin changera une partie importante des arrangements sanctionnés par le Traité de Paris de 1856, et que l'interprétation de l'Article II du Traité de Londres, qui dépend du Traité de Paris, peut ainsi être sujet à des contestations. Je déclare de la part de l'Angleterre que les obligations de Sa Majesté Britannique concernant la clôture des Détroits se bornent à un engagement envers le Sultan de respecter à cet égard les déterminations indépendantes de Sa Majesté, conforme à l'esprit des Traités existants.' We have then the three Empires agreeing to oppose any suggestion by the British Government that in the case of a war with Russia, they should send their fleet into the Black Sea.]

### III. 143

MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *February 6th, 1880*

*Secret.*

During my conversation of yesterday with de Sabouroff, the Russian Ambassador, he expressed serious anxiety that the British might at any moment suddenly occupy, and indeed seize Constantinople. The fact of the British Ambassador having repeatedly threatened to summon the Fleet, as being a measure ready to his hand any day, must necessarily direct Russia's attention to this question. Russia could afford without anxiety to see the key of the Dardanelles in the hands of an independent Turkey, but not in those of a European Power. The Straits were not the open sea, but formed part of the Turkish possessions, and the forces of European Powers might not enter them at will, either on land or sea. If foreign fleets might sail into the Dardanelles without Turkey's permission, as they pleased, there would be no security for the Coasts of the Black Sea. Russia certainly needed peace, but also security; and her security would be threatened by the menacing attitude of the British Fleet, that is, if the British Ambassador considered himself justified in summoning it to Constantinople with no other authority than that of his own Government. It would be in accordance with a policy of peace, to give guarantees to Russia against an invasion of the Black Sea by foreign fleets. M. Sabouroff made no definite proposals, and the conversation was strictly confidential, so that I do not feel called upon to make any communication about it. This Memorandum is to be treated as a minute on the official documents. . . .

[In an Aide-mémoire, addressed by de Sabouroff, February 5th, 1880, to Prince Bismarck, the history of the Dardanelles question was recapitulated as from the year 1833. The Treaty of Unkar-Skelessi had been modified to the disadvantage of Russia by the Treaty of London, 1841, which closed not only the entry to, but also the exit from the Black Sea to ships of war. The Treaty of Paris, 1856, perpetuated the same principle.

The Treaty of London, 1871, made the right of passing the Straits depend on the Sultan's permission, thus 'turning completely against us (Russia) the principle of closing, which was, in its origin, meant to serve as a protection for us.'

The Aide-mémoire continues:]

... Finally, at the Congress of Berlin, of 1878, our last security was taken from us by England's declaration (in Protocol 18) that 'her obligations, regarding the closing of the Straits, were limited to an engagement to the Sultan to respect his independent decisions on that subject'.

Two serious consequences result from this declaration: First, England denies the mutually obligatory character of the Treaty of 1841, which bound all the Powers in common.—She regards herself as bound only to Turkey.

Secondly, she would pay no more respect to the Sultan's will, if the latter closed the Straits at our request; for then, in the terms of the British declaration, the Sultan's decisions would no longer be independent.

In other words,—England reserves to herself henceforward the right of entering the Straits, whenever she chooses!

No Power has ever protested against this novel interpretation, which renders the principle of closing entirely illusory and substitutes the right of the strongest for that of treaties. Russia alone declares against it. . . .

### III. 147

#### MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE HOHENLOHE, INTERIM HEAD OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 4th, 1880*

M. de Sabouroff informed me that he had received from M. de Giers (Russian Foreign Minister) an answer to his secret Report of his conversation with the Imperial Chancellor. According to it, the Russian Emperor had declared himself in agreement with the suggestion put by Sabouroff and agreed to by Prince Bismarck. The suggestion is as follows:

In the event of England's taking action on the Eastern Question further than may coincide with the interests of the Powers, and in particular if the British Fleet should make any motion towards passing the Dardanelles, Germany, Austria and Russia should agree to prevent this intention by a joint declaration.

I pointed out to M. de Sabouroff the discrepancy between his views of to-day and those he expressed on July 30th, when he told me that if England took action in the Eastern Question, Russia would likewise have to enter the field, to secure the settlement of the Montenegrin frontier question; M. de Sabouroff replied that this action would only be taken, if the Montenegrin frontier question were still unsettled. This however was on the way to settlement. . . .

In the course of conversation Sabouroff alleged that Lord Odo Russell had suggested to him an understanding between England and Russia, to the effect that Russia should leave the

Straits open, and that in return, England would prevent Austria from taking possession of Salonika!

### III. THE FIRST TRIPLE ALLIANCE, 1882

III. 403

MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *December 22nd, 1881*

I received the two Turkish dignitaries, each separately, (Ali Nizamy Pacha and Reschid Bey) but I said the same to each of them, as did Count Hatzfeldt also. Being asked for my advice I recommended in general that the Porte should definitely renounce what it has given up, in order to devote itself politically to keeping what it has. I began with a warning not to count on German support in any enterprise, which may disturb the peace of Europe.

#### *German Note.*

In a despatch to Schweinitz, in St. Petersburg (January 13th, 1882), the Prince wrote that he had had apparent reason to suspect that the Turkish negotiators' main reason for coming to Berlin was 'to secure German co-operation for projected hostilities against France'.

I said that we did not know whether the time could come again when we might be attacked by France. But we were absolutely determined to seize no opportunity, however favourable in appearance, of taking the offensive against France as we neither wished nor expected anything from France in the way of possessions, but merely to keep the peace on our Western borders. If therefore the Porte wished to make trouble with France by means of risings in North Africa, we should deplore it as being a danger to the peace of Europe, and should refuse to support any warlike plan of the Porte either directly or indirectly. Moreover I did not think that the Porte would find other allies for a policy which endangered peace. On the contrary, she would be held responsible at her own risk for such enterprises. I added my firm conviction that France cherished no intentions with regard to Tripolis, and that there was no need for the financial burden of a force to protect that Turkish possession there. The Porte might perhaps demand of France a binding engagement regarding Tripolis, either through the mediation of England or directly.

III. 205-6

MEMORANDUM BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *January 31st, 1882*

The Italian Ambassador declared to me to-day that his Government desired to associate itself with German-Austrian policy and added that the King of Italy and his Ministers were fully agreed on this point.

I replied that we were genuinely rejoiced at the Italian

Government's overture. Our policy, as he knew, was directed above all at maintaining peace, and that we were united and allied with Austria and Russia for this object. In Austria particularly the Emperor and nation felt the need of peace and were working for it, and it was evident that a kind of political honour existed between us, which bound us in the important question, which he was raising, not to anticipate the decisions of our friend, the Austrian Government.

Count Launay objected that he had definitely hoped for a decision from us on his Government's proposal, which would otherwise be bandied to and fro. I replied that business between Germany and Italy was different from and simpler than the same would be between Italy and Austria. We shared no frontier in common, nor did the interests of the two nations clash at other points. With Austria it was quite otherwise. In the Balkans and on the Adriatic each party had competing interests, which might lead to difficulties. I did not know whether the aspirations of Italia irredenta were definitely and for ever extinct, for they had but a short time ago stood in the way of establishing good relations with Austria.

Count Launay assured me with vehemence that there was now no question of Italia irredenta, and that in all leading circles in Italy the desire predominated to remove all that might prejudice good relations with the neighbouring country.

He then went a step further and asked whether the understanding for a common policy with the two Imperial Courts, which his Government desired, could not be drawn up in writing. I explained the difficulties there would be in setting out the mutual feelings of friendship, which existed, in treaty form. It would not be easy to draft anything which would express all their wishes. I would not venture to prepare such a draft as Count Launay contemplated. It was difficult to define the principles limiting the extent of such an agreement, and they might drag each one of the participants further than he meant to go or could answer for to his own country. What would be Italy's position, if, say, Germany, conscious that with the addition of the Italian Army, the two Imperial Powers had increased strength behind them, declared war unnecessarily against France for some cause not now foreseen? This might seem unlikely now, but it could not be ignored that a written Alliance, with the military strength accompanying it, might lead each one of the participants into temptation for his own private ends, and make excessive demands on the forces of his Allies, without the excuse of being in danger. Who could say whether, under Parliamentary pressure, Italian policy would sooner or later slip into complications on the North coast of Africa or elsewhere, which might perhaps have been

avoided for the sake of peace, had the Cabinet not been able to count on German assistance? Similar possibilities were not out of the question for Russia and Austria in the Balkans or elsewhere.

Count Launay admitted that drafting an alliance, as Italy wished it, presented great difficulties, but that he had hoped 'que je suggérerais une rédaction acceptable pour toutes les parties'.

I replied that with the best will in the world I could only indicate the difficulties, that impeded the realisation of this idea and were caused by the nature of the case.

In mentioning the advantages accruing to the participants out of a formal alliance, I had explained that it was not all countries that could offer such a guarantee for the strict observance of their engagements, and especially not those States in which the Parliament was more influential than the dynasty, I gave England as an instance. It was impossible to form a lasting alliance with her, because domestic politics come before foreign, and the Parties, which take turns in governing the country, do not necessarily acknowledge their predecessors' engagements. The Monarchy, moreover, was not strong enough to maintain its foreign policy against the Party actually in power. The recent British change of Ministry was an instance of this. In Germany, as in Austria, it was different; although they also had Parliamentary institutions, there was a Monarchy strong enough to keep the treaty promises under all circumstances. If it ever happened here that a Parliament were to resist the carrying out of an international Treaty, the Chamber would undoubtedly get the worst of it, and the Monarch would win the day, as he could rely on the nation's recognition of his rights and on a faithful Army. With such Allies there could be no possible danger of a change of policy occasioned by pressure at home. It was not certain whether conditions in Italy, which presented to foreigners the spectacle of Ministries constantly shifting towards the Left, allowed the King similar freedom of action. Count Launay assured me that just now all Parties were agreed as to the necessity of uniting with the three Imperial Courts. He wished to exclude all doubts as to the King's ability to rely completely on the Army. On which I pointed out that a Monarch, who wore civilian dress, was not doing all that he could to identify himself with his Army.

In general I met the Italian Ambassador's overture in a willing and friendly spirit, so as not to discourage him. At the same time I gave him no decisive answer as to my being able to make a recommendation to the Emperor. I repeatedly made it a condition that Italy should come to an understanding with Austria

on the interests of both of them, and I summed up by saying that we should regard anything that Italy did for Austria, as a favour to ourselves, and that for Italy the key of the door leading to us was to be found in Vienna.

My final impression is that although I was obliged to offer many well-founded objections to the proposal of a formal Alliance, Count Launay was not dissatisfied by our conversation, and will have reported to Rome in this sense.

*MINUTE BY THE EMPEROR* ✓

I must declare my full agreement with Prince Bismarck's reply to Count Launay, since I never cared for premature alliances. But I am all for an alliance concluded ad hoc, when once the die is cast. We should never forget the advantage we derived from that alliance in 1866, and although Italian successes did not amount to much, an Austrian Army of 130,000 men marched into Italy and luckily for us, were not against us in Bohemia.

In dealing with Italy we should not ignore these memories and should retain her friendship, for 130,000 extra Austrians at Königgrätz might easily have turned the scale against us.

III. 208

BUSCH, OF THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, *February 14th, 1882*

Your Report of February 10th has arrived. On the day before Count Launay, under instructions from his Government, informed me orally that the latter, in agreement with the Chancellor's advice, had applied to Vienna with its proposals for a closer connection with Austro-German policy, and had provided Count Robilant with detailed instructions.

It depends first of all how far these so-called detailed instructions, which were drawn up with the knowledge of Count Launay's conversation with Prince Bismarck, differ from those, in obedience to which Count Robilant raised the subject with Count Kalnoky on January 18th. Although the Chancellor entirely entrusts the Minister with the handling of the overtures that are awaited there, he does not hesitate to remark that it would be well for the Italians to formulate a proposal, and therefore advisable to urge them to do so. With some such text, showing exactly what they want, the possibility, with its pros and cons, of uniting Italian policy with that of Germany and Austria could perhaps best be discussed and if necessary, cause delay as effectually as would a reference to tendentious action by the Italian Government in individual cases.

## III. 211

BUSCH, OF THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO PRINCE  
HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, *February 28th, 1882*

In reply to your Report of the 21st (not given) I beg you to express the Chancellor's thanks to Count Kalnoky for his communication to you.

You already know our views regarding a guarantee for Rome, which the Italian Government appears to desire. According to the explanation about territorial guarantees, which Count Kalnoky made to Count Robilant, it is probable that this idea will not be pursued further. They will become convinced that any attempt to have it laid down in black and white will meet with stronger resistance and finally rejection. But should the Italians persist in making their wishes known, the Chancellor would recommend turning a deaf ear as long as possible on any subject that affects the Pope.

On the other hand, Prince Bismarck questions whether, when the Minister, Mancini, has to draft a treaty, he will limit himself to one of neutrality. He believes that this would not suffice for the Italian Government's needs, and he considers that it might be to the interest of the German Powers not to discourage the Italian hopes of further concessions. What the Italians hope to gain by joining in our peace policy in Foreign matters only, excluding relations with the Pope, is a lessening of the danger, threatening them from France. A treaty of neutrality would only give them the certainty of having to fight it out with France alone when the event arose. This would reassure them all the less, as they would in any case not easily visualise Germany and Austria on the side of France. But if they are left entirely free, they are still exposed to the temptation of entering into active alliance with France, and offering themselves there at the price of the guarantee of Rome. To prevent this and keep Italian policy in its present course, and to protect the Italian Kingdom against the dangers, to which a treaty engagement and reciprocity of action with the Radical elements in France and Italy would expose it, it might be considered whether the German Powers would not do well to allow Italy to hope for their support against an unprovoked *attack* by France. Consideration for Italian sensibilities and also our own interests would suggest that it should be in the form of reciprocity, and that Italy also should promise her support to us in the event of an attack by France. I admit that Italy's military weakness and her limited ability to act outside her frontiers make the comparative strength and the hoped for mutual services very unequal. But it would be an advantage not to be despised, if, supposing France in

alliance with Russia undertook a war, Italy were on our side, even though it were but nominally and without her doing much. We should thus be free to employ elsewhere the troops, which we should otherwise have to place in or near the Alps. The Chancellor would advise leading the academic discussion and, if this develops into negotiations, the latter also in the direction indicated above, i.e., a mutual promise of support against an unprovoked attack by France, whatever its reason or excuse may be.

Count Robilant's contention that it is Prince Bismarck's wish not to make the eventual engagement too general in nature or to give it too long a period, must rest on a misunderstanding or be simply a pretext. In a former despatch of December 31st, 1881 (not given) the idea was mentioned of making the taking over of Austro-German engagements depend on the duration of our present relations towards Russia; but in the single conversation, which the Chancellor had with Count Launay on this subject, he gave expression to neither of these two wishes, as is shown in the Memorandum of January 31st, which was communicated to you. His Highness also requests you not to insist on clinging too closely to the letter of the despatch of December 31st, for the events that have happened since that date, in spite of unimpaired confidence in the intentions of the Emperor Alexander, leave it unfortunately doubtful how the struggle between the opposing forces in Russia will end.

Please speak to Count Kalnoky in the sense of this despatch.

*German Note.*

The reference is to the rising in Bosnia and Dalmatia, which had been stirred up by the Slavs, and the famous speech of the Russian General Skoboleff (January 24th), which undisguisedly gave vent to the Pan-Slav hatred against Austria-Hungary and Germany.

III. 216

BUSCH, OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, TO HERR VON KEUDELL,  
AMBASSADOR IN ROME, *March 9th, 1882*

*Confidential.*

Your Report of February 26th (not given) has been communicated to Prince Reuss to use in his discussions with Count Kalnoky. His Report of March 5th (not given) of which I enclose a copy, on his latest conversation with the Minister touches, besides the proposals made by you, other points in the discussion, which we are carrying on with Italy regarding the rapprochement. To complete your information, I beg to add that we are not able to offer the Italians the guarantee for the former Papal States and especially for Rome, out of consideration for our Catholic nationals—and for Austria-Hungary still less. Nevertheless, the



Chancellor favours the idea of promising to support Italy against an unprovoked French attack under conditions still to be determined. Should this happen, and should it be necessary to guard the side on which the Italian Kingdom is really endangered, the Roman question would become merely one of domestic interest, and Italy need not bring it into an international agreement.

The Chancellor requests you not to discuss Italy's offer of a rapprochement and its chances of success with statesmen in Rome. He said particularly that the only object of this communication is to inform you, and to prevent your getting into opposition with the views held here, in the general assurances of good-will, with which you would be answering the other side, when the subject is mentioned.

### III. 219-20

BUSCH, OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, TO PRINCE HENRY VII  
OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, *March 16th, 1882*

The Chancellor's remark on your Report of the 10th (not given) is that it has never been his intention to propose a formula for the Agreement with Italy, that would be directed against France, and France alone. He merely wishes to indicate that Italy's main danger is from France, and therefore that a mere Treaty of neutrality or an agreement giving no security against a French attack would not meet Italy's need. The Chancellor therefore wishes you to inform Count Kalnoky that for himself he would have no objection to the form of the Agreement being kept general, especially as the present situation seems to indicate that Russia will be at war before France.

As for Count Kalnoky's remark that Austria has nothing to fear from France, the Chancellor thinks that it scarcely fits in with the facts. If Austria went to war with Russia, and Germany was dragged in, the risk is not so remote that France might turn against Germany *and* Austria.

### III. 220

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *March 18th, 1882*

*Confidential.*

I received the Despatch of March 16th respecting the negotiations with Italy yesterday by messenger.

Count Kalnoky had invited me to come and discuss the same subject to-day.

Count Wimpffen telegraphs that the Italian Ministers have now decided on the identical Instructions to be forwarded to the Ambassadors in Berlin and Vienna, and that these will be in their

hands in the next few days. Signor Mancini has given the Austrian Ambassador no details concerning these Instructions, owing to the difficulty of transmitting their contents to the Vienna Cabinet in a telegraphic analysis.

Count Kalnoky will now accept Count Robilant's proposals ad referendum, but will certainly start by rejecting as insufficient a bare platonic declaration, set out in an unsigned Protocol, such as was proposed through Count Wimpffen and Herr von Keudell.

The Minister told me that the longer he thought of it, the more necessary it seemed to him to bind Italy by a formal Agreement, and he thinks that he shares this view with Your Highness. He was glad to hear from me that so long as a defensive only was involved, Your Highness felt no objection against a form of Agreement with Italy in general terms. He had himself already become familiar with the idea of concluding a defensive alliance with Italy, merely providing against an unprovoked attack by France. For it was quite clear to him that if peace was disturbed at all, whether by France or Russia, Austria-Hungary would be involved in the resulting war. He was therefore fairly indifferent, whether the Italian Treaty seemed to be directed against France alone or not. But the Emperor, his Master, who was far from cherishing any sympathy for France, still stood on the same ground as in the negotiations at Gastein and Vienna in 1879. Your Highness would recollect the reasons for his taking this view. For this reason he, the Minister, had asked that the eventual Defensive Treaty should be drafted in general terms; but he hoped to be able gradually to bring His Majesty round to his, the Minister's, point of view.

He had prepared a draft,<sup>1</sup> which he had discussed with the Emperor, but had not yet submitted to him. In it, after a mutual engagement not to make war on each other, he had dealt with the mutual promise of support against an unprovoked French attack. Then followed an Article, declaring that if one or two of the Signatory Powers went to war with one or more of the Powers outside the Treaty, the other or others were bound to assist.

The Minister hoped that this Article would remove his Emperor's scruples, and further that it would ensure Italy's support in a war between Austria and Russia.

Count Kalnoky is still as suspicious as ever that Italy has some agreement with Russia, and so expects opposition on the part of the Italian Cabinet. In any case it would now be ascertained whether there was anything of the sort or not.

The same draft also provides for certain clauses, which Italy wishes to include, regarding her position towards the Egyptian

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pribram, *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914*, I. 65.

question and other less important ones, and we must wait until they propose them formally.

I repeat that Count Kalnoky does not intend to approach the Italians with this Draft just yet. He has prepared it for his own use alone, in order to describe the border line, up to which he is willing to go. He spoke of it to me, so that I might inform Your Highness of his views.

### III. 222

BUSCH, OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, *March 24th, 1882*

The Chancellor has shown your Report to His Majesty. The latter stated that he agreed that we will go as far as Austria herself thinks it useful to go, in meeting the Italian desires, and will try to supply the Italian need for a defensive alliance. The Chancellor requests you to communicate this to Count Kalnoky.

I beg to add that a communication received yesterday from Herr von Keudell (in Rome) states that a fresh Instruction has been sent to Count Robilant (on the 18th). It grants the Ambassador extended powers for a further rapprochement on Italy's part. Herr von Keudell also adds that the idea of a formal treaty is out of the question; but I tell you confidentially for your information that this does not agree with the statement of Count Launay, who gave the Chancellor contrary assurances yesterday.

### III. 222-3

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *March 24th, 1882*

*Confidential.*

Count Robilant has just made the long-expected proposals to the Foreign Minister and is trying to find an excuse for the long delay.

Count Kalnoky has come to the conclusion that the Italian Cabinet's proposals are much the same as his own ideas, which I have already reported, and that the Italian Ministers are not shrinking from undertaking a binding engagement. He ascribes this result to the strong influence of Count Robilant, who earnestly wishes to complete it in this way. The Minister has communicated to me the details of his conversation with my Italian colleague, as follows:

The Instruction received by the Italian Ambassador starts by describing the conservatively peaceful object of the Alliance and the monarchical character required in an understanding

between the three Powers. There is a promise not to go to war together and to enter into no alliance against any one of the Signatory Powers. (BISMARCK : 'Good.')

The Italian Representative suggested that the Preamble should declare mutual recognition of existing possessions. But Count Kalnoky would not agree to this and the point has been dropped. (BISMARCK : 'Good.')

The Italian proposal next suggests the following four Articles :

I. Mutual support in questions of general policy. (BISMARCK : '*Goes too far in generalities.—Yes, as far as individual interests allow ; we might be let in for all Italy's requirements in Egypt.*'')

II. The promise of mutual support against an unprovoked attack by France.

III. In the event of an attack on Germany or Austria by Russia, Italy engages to observe a benevolent armed neutrality. If Russia brings France into such a war, the *casus foederis* comes into action. (BISMARCK : '*II and III good.*'')

IV. A benevolent neutrality in every case, in which a Signatory Power becomes involved in a war elsewhere. (BISMARCK : 'Good.')

Italy desires that the Agreement be signed by the three Powers. The Cabinet of Rome wishes to establish the understanding first with Austria, (BISMARCK : '*This is a preliminary condition to our agreement.*'') it being assumed that continuous feeling is of course maintained with Germany during the negotiations. (BISMARCK : 'Yes.')

Count Kalnoky wishes to find a form for Article III, whereby Italy would be bound to take action, supposing that in a war, in which Germany or Austria were involved against Russia, a provocative attitude on France's part should force Germany or Austria to attack her. (BISMARCK : '*Too fine-drawn to prove casus foederis. If Italy is honest and capable of a decision, she will herself be interested in preventing a French victory. We hardly require more than a benevolent neutrality,—perhaps not Italy's strength either. There is more point in sparing Austria's forces, than in gaining Italy's.*'')

The Minister is also doubtful whether Russia should be mentioned by name in the Treaty, or whether it might not be preferable to choose a less direct form, such as he thought of at first. (BISMARCK : '*Would be more decent under present circumstances.*'')

The Minister has accepted the Italian proposal *ad referendum*.

Count Robilant begged him to undertake the drafting of the Agreement. He has declared his readiness to do so and is busy with it now. Soon he will submit his draft to Your Highness and would be deeply grateful to learn Your Highness's opinion.

The Minister considers that the Treaty, which will be described as secret, shall be of about 5 years' duration. (BISMARCK: 'Good.')

### III. 233

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, VIENNA, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 28th, 1882*

#### *Extract.*

After the discussion of the draft was finished, Count Robilant read to me a private letter from Mancini (Italian Foreign Minister), an extract from which I beg to submit to Your Highness.

This letter betrays the anxiety of the Italian Cabinet, lest Article III of the Treaty might be taken as referring to England.

(Article III. Si une ou deux des parties contractantes sont engagées dans une guerre avec deux ou plusieurs grandes puissances non-signataires du présent traité, le casus foederis se présente simultanément pour toutes les parties contractantes.)

The Italian Cabinet, which is now greatly afraid of being compelled at some time to declare war on England and to expose herself to the blows of that country, wishes now to propose something which may ensure Italy against such a possibility.

Signor Mancini, therefore, suggests the signing of a secret protocol by the three Allied Powers, whereby they shall leave the door open for England to subscribe to all the points of the Triple Alliance, or at any rate, to agree upon reciprocal neutrality. In this way all idea of a conflict with England will be excluded.

This reservation regarding the possible consent of England should, however, be so arranged, that the moment, as well as the method, of opening negotiations with the British Cabinet should be settled only by agreement of all three Powers. (BISMARCK: '*Seems unobjectionable according to the facts, but there is foundation for Count Kalnoky's criticism.*') .

Count Robilant describes this desire of his Government as being very urgent, but says that it lies quite outside the scope of the Treaty and need not prejudice it.

The Minister's way of speaking to me of the plan showed me with absolute certainty that he entirely disapproved of it. Given the present composition of the British Cabinet, we should all be exposed to the greatest danger of indiscretions. Sir Charles Dilke (Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) (BISMARCK: '*And Chamberlain.*') would, if it suited him, have no hesitation in informing his friends in France of the existence of a defensive Treaty, aimed directly at France.

He (Kalnoky) told the Italian Ambassador that Article III was in no way directed against England. Any combinations

which might lead to this supposition, were most improbable. It would cause difficulties, and confuse the object, which we have been pursuing, if we enter into negotiations with England now. (BISMARCK: 'Correct.') He would not consider it opportune, and moreover, did not know the views of the Imperial German Cabinet. If the others consented, he personally had no objection to giving the Italian Cabinet an official declaration stating expressly that our Treaty is not aimed at England. But the signing of a Protocol to this effect seemed to him superfluous. (BISMARCK: 'Naturally.')

Count Kalnoky has now no doubt that Your Highness will be in agreement with his views. His suspicions are directed, not against England, but against the English Ministers. (BISMARCK: 'Against Dilke, Chamberlain and Gladstone, with justification.') He begs Your Highness to acquaint him with your opinions on this point, to guide him in his dealings with the Italians.

*Enclosure.*

*Aide-mémoire, embodying the wishes of the Italian Cabinet.*

*Secret.*

Il serait désirable que, par un protocole séparé et secret signé en même temps que le Traité, on laisse la porte ouverte à l'Angleterre à accéder sinon à tous les accords de l'Alliance à trois, au moins à celui qui fixe la neutralité mutuelle; moyennant quoi l'hypothèse d'un conflit avec cette Puissance resterait exclue des vues des trois Puissances.

Cette réserve d'une possible accession de la part de l'Angleterre devrait être conçue de manière à bien faire comprendre que non seulement l'accord éventuel avec le Cabinet de Londres, mais aussi que l'ouverture même de négociations dans ce but seraient explicitement subordonnés tant pour le moment comme pour les modalités de l'accession au préalable consentement mutuel des trois Puissances contractantes.

PRINCE BISMARCK. 'The idea of declaring war on England enters into the ideas of no one of the Contracting Parties, for no one could do so with success. If England declares war, there will be no choice.'

III. 238

COUNT HATZFELDT, TEMPORARILY HEAD OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, May 4th 1882

I beg to reproduce in full the Chancellor's views on the Italian amendments to the Vienna Draft of the Treaty.

As has been said already, in Italy they have no need to lay

such stress on the choice of expressions in the Treaty. The essential point is to obtain Italy's benevolent neutrality, and the Chancellor has no great belief in any future active use for it; if, however, it can be obtained, it would be very nice, but we could get on without it.

The Chancellor makes no remark on the additions in the Preamble and on Articles I and II, and so he agrees with Count Kalnoky's views.

He also agrees with Count Kalnoky as to the changes proposed in Article III. He prefers Count Kalnoky's original draft, but has also no objection to the view of the Italian Ministry, granted that the words 'attaquées et à se trouver par ce fait' are taken out. The main point is still the same—that Italy shall not assist an enemy or an aggressor.

The Chancellor sees no need for the proposed insertions in Article IV, but thinks them innocuous. For instance, if Roumania attacks Austria, Italy could not assist the aggressor, for according to the Treaty she would have to enter the field against herself, as a 'grande puissance agressive'. In this case too he would prefer the original draft, but he would not make a *conditio sine qua non* of it.

His Highness thinks the suggested addition to Article V superfluous, but not objectionable, and remarks that the Italian wish for the phrase 'aucune espèce de traité' has reference to our attitude in 1866. But then also we undertook in our Alliance with them, not to conclude an armistice without them. The lack of honesty they observed towards us at that time forced us to find a way out of this engagement without breaking the letter of the Treaty. So the Austrian and German leaders agreed to have three days of rest and to refrain from shooting, so long as the enemy did the same.

The Chancellor has nothing to say against an agreement by the three parties to the Treaty, allowing England freedom to join the Alliance fully or in part, in itself, but he shares Count Kalnoky's objection to signing such an instrument, and would, like him, only agree to a Ministerial declaration being made to Italy to the effect that the Treaty is not directed against England. None of the Contracting Parties would think of *declaring* war on England, for none of them could conduct it with success; but if England declared it, there would be no choice. He considers that the suspicion against the British Ministers is thoroughly well-founded—not only against Sir Charles Dilke with his French affinities, but also against Gladstone. The latter, incalculable as he always is, speaking at Edinburgh on March 17th, 1880, displayed a dislike of Austria, which seems to be insuperable, and very especially with regard to Chamberlain.

I would remark finally that His Majesty the Emperor has declared his agreement with the Chancellor's view and grants full powers to you to conclude the Treaty. I shall forward them to you by the next messenger.

III. 244

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *May 20th, 1882*

*Confidential.*

I beg to report to your Highness that at 2 o'clock to-day the Defensive Treaty between Germany, Austria and Italy was signed by Count Kalnoky, Count Robilant and myself, after it had been collated, and the Full Powers of the Plenipotentiaries had been examined and approved.

I forward the copy destined for the Imperial Government, and I beg that within the appointed period of three weeks the Ratification by His Majesty may be sent to me. The Italian Ambassador expects to have his Ratification ready for exchanging in about a week.

Further I submit the draft of the Ministerial Declaration, upon which we agreed, and which represents the idea expressed by Italy, to the effect that the stipulations of the Secret Treaty signed to-day are not to be regarded as directed against England.

Count Kalnoky proposes that these Ministerial Declarations be exchanged on the day on which the Ratifications of the Treaty are exchanged.

*Enclosure.*

*Déclaration Ministérielle.*

Le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal déclare que les stipulations du Traité Secret conclu le 20 mai 1882 entre l'Autriche-Hongrie, l'Allemagne et l'Italie ne pourront—comme il a été préalablement convenu—en aucun cas être envisagées comme étant dirigées contre l'Angleterre.

En foi de quoi la présente Déclaration Ministérielle, qui devra également rester secrète a été dressée pour être échangée contre des Déclarations identiques du Gouvernement Impérial d'Allemagne et du Gouvernement Royal d'Italie.

III. 246.

*The Triple Alliance of May 20th, 1882.*

Article I.

The Hautes Parties Contractantes se promettent mutuellement paix et amitié, et n'entreront dans aucune alliance ou engagement dirigé contre l'un de leurs États.



Elles s'engagent à procéder à un échange d'idées sur les questions politiques et économiques d'une nature générale qui pourraient se présenter, et se promettent en outre leur appui mutuel dans la limite de leurs propres intérêts.

#### Article II.

Dans le cas où l'Italie, sans provocation directe de sa part, serait attaquée par la France pour quelque motif que ce soit, les deux autres Parties Contractantes seront tenues à prêter à la Partie attaquée secours et assistance avec toutes leurs forces.

Cette même obligation incombera à l'Italie dans le cas d'une agression non directement provoquée de la France contre l'Allemagne.

#### Article III.

Si une ou deux des Hautes Parties Contractantes, sans provocation directe de leur part, venaient à être attaquées et à se trouver engagées dans une guerre avec deux ou plusieurs Grandes Puissances non-signataires du présent Traité, le 'casus foederis' se présentera simultanément pour toutes les Hautes Parties Contractantes.

#### Article IV.

Dans le cas où une Grande Puissance non-Signataire du présent Traité menacerait la sécurité des États de l'une des Hautes Parties Contractantes et la Partie menacée se verrait par là forcée de lui faire la guerre, les deux autres s'obligent à observer à l'égard de leur Allié une neutralité bienveillante. Chacune se réserve dans ce cas la faculté de prendre part à la guerre, si elle jugeait à-propos, pour faire cause commune avec son Allié.

#### Article V.

Si la paix de l'une des Hautes Parties Contractantes venait à être menacée dans les circonstances prévues par les Articles précédents, les Hautes Parties Contractantes se concerteront en temps utile sur les mesures militaires à prendre en vue d'une co-opération éventuelle. . . .

#### Article VI.

Les Hautes Puissances Contractantes se promettent mutuellement le secret sur le contenu et sur l'existence du présent Traité.

#### Article VII.

Le présent Traité restera en vigueur durant l'espace de cinq ans à partir du jour de l'échange des ratifications.

Article VIII.

Les ratifications du présent Traité seront échangées à Vienne dans un délai de trois semaines ou plus tôt si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé le présent Traité et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Vienne le 20 Mai, 1882.

H. VII. P. REUSS.      KALNOKY.      C. ROHLANT.

III. 247

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*May 22nd, 1882*

I send under cover the two Italian documents (the Treaty and the additional Declaration). I approve of them and request that the rest of the relevant papers be prepared and laid before me. I cannot refrain from putting on record the remark that our diplomacy bears no responsibility for the drafting of the documents, either as regards form or contents. ~~The sole point for us was to relieve our Ally Austria as much as possible from the burden of covering her Italian frontier in the event of war. Any drafting which attained this end satisfied us, and I avoided increasing the existing difficulties by further demands for precision of drafting.~~

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GERMAN RAPPROCHEMENT WITH FRANCE, 1879<sup>1</sup>

[Very soon after the Congress of Berlin Prince Bismarck was preparing to let Russia go and assume a friendly attitude towards France.]

#### III. 387

PRINCE BISMARCK TO PRINCE HOHENLOHE, AMBASSADOR  
IN PARIS, *August 28th*, 1878

I shall be glad to meet M. Gambetta, when a natural opportunity presents itself. A meeting was planned before, and was only prevented by my illness at Easter. I still desire to make M. Gambetta's acquaintance and to come to a political understanding with him.

*German Note.*

Prince Hohenlohe's Report from Paris (December 20th, 1878) made a statement regarding a dispute which had arisen between France and Tunis and had said that Mr. Wood, the British Representative, had indulged in provocative action.

*German Note.*

George Pagés, in his *L'Hégémonie Allemande*, in the Report of *la Commission d'Enquête sur les faits la Guerre*, Vol. I, p. 171, states that at the Congress of Berlin Prince Bismarck gave M. Waddington to understand that he considered Tunis as part of France's scheme of expansion. But the Foreign Office Records contain no support for the statement that Prince Bismarck encouraged Waddington then to take possession of Tunis.

#### III. 388

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO BÜLOW, FOREIGN OFFICE,  
BERLIN, *January 3rd*, 1879

. . . The Imperial Chancellor has expressed the wish that Your Excellency should speak to Lord [Odo] Russell on the subject of Tunis, and should ask him whether it is authentic that the British Consul there is maintaining an unfriendly attitude towards France.

<sup>1</sup> For the English point of view on the events recorded in this and the following chapters the reader should consult the *Life of Lord Granville*, by Fitzmaurice, and Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*.

We believed formerly that British policy felt no need to annoy France in Tunis, and this is the Imperial Chancellor's desire, for any action agreeable to France, combined with his friendly relations towards England, would appear to further the cause of peace. 'I do not believe,' he continued, 'that it would be very easy to drive the French into the Russian camp or into an anti-English policy; but if their national feeling, irritated, as it is, by their ill-success in war, should be insulted when they raise an apparently justified claim against a small Power such as Tunis, it is hard to calculate, whether her policy, so far peaceable and not unfriendly towards England, might turn in some fresh direction.

I spoke to Count St. Vallier to-day and told him that we must hold the French claim to be justified and would support his Government diplomatically, as far as possible.'

*German Note.*

In the course of the efforts made to restore the shattered administration of the Egyptian finances, for which end an European Commission of Enquiry had been set up, an Anglo-French Condominium had in practice been established, expressed outwardly by the appointment of an English and a French financial Controller. Seeing that this arrangement threatened to approach too near the interests of the other European Powers, a project was formulated by Austria, whereby, either an international Commission of Liquidation and Control should be appointed in addition to the two Western European Controllers, or, a third Controller, chosen from amongst the Powers most concerned (Austria, Germany and Italy), should be associated with the two others in a settled rotation. In a note addressed to Prince Bismarck, on November 20th, 1879, Radowitz, of the Foreign Office, opposed any participation in the duties of the Controllers. (See the following Despatch.)

III. 394

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, VARZIN, TO RADOWITZ OF THE  
GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 23rd, 1879*

Having submitted to the Chancellor your Minute on Egypt, I beg to return it herewith.

The Chancellor remarked that his advice was not to adopt the alternative suggested by Austria, as your Minute explains it, after the Western Powers once have agreed together, and the competence of their Controllers has already been established. The objections against the Austrian Proposal, as first formulated, are constructively set out in your Minute. The others, however, did not seem quite justified, first because the Western Powers would resist their realisation to the utmost, and also, the situation of an International Liquidation Commission, set, as it would be, between the two Controllers and the Egyptian Government would be most difficult and almost undefinable.

The Chancellor considered the Anglo-French demand to occupy a preferential position in Egypt far from being in principle un-

justified, for these countries held interests 20 times greater than those of Germany and Austria, and especially in comparison with Germany held a material stake far exceeding that proportion.

The Chancellor wishes, therefore, that we reply politely to Vienna that we are examining the Austrian proposal, but would, meanwhile, suggest that we should prefer to grant to England and France a mandate for the protection of our Nationals and the guaranteeing of our interests. Such a mandate could naturally only be conveyed to the Western Powers under the condition of their treating the interests of other nations on the same footing and with the same attention as their own, and that it lapses the moment that this equality is disregarded by the Western Powers.

Prince Bismarck does not, however, desire any wish or demand in this sense expressed in Vienna, but only suggested the idea very respectfully, and he wishes to enquire the views of the Vienna Cabinet on the possibility of a collective mandate to the Western Powers for the benefit of the other Powers.

The Chancellor's chief wish is thus to do some small service to France, who has, in fact, very important interests in Egypt. He desires to show politeness to France, to meet her wishes in this affair and to allow a small success, in order not to be the cause of the fall of the present French Government. From this incomparably weightier motive we might willingly make the small concessions in Egypt, and the Chancellor wishes it placed before Baron Haymerle, as the principal reason for his inclination to be accommodating in Egypt. . . .

### III. 396

PRINCE BISMARCK TO WEBER, GERMAN MINISTER AT TANGIER,  
*April 9th, 1880*

I thank you for your Report of March 27th on the French project for a Trans-Saharan Railway and other subjects connected with it. In it I read with satisfaction that the French Government is being moved to seek a field for the rising national activities in parts where no collision with our interests is likely. The possibility you suggest of a collision between British and French interests is extremely unlikely and is removed still further off by Gladstone's victory at the Polls. For we may assume that neither France nor England, especially under a Government directed in Parliament and in the Cabinet by Gladstone, will not be inclined, for the sake of the objects of dispute in Europe, to endanger the increase of power and security, which the partners in this Anglo-French joint undertaking expect for themselves.

I consider that the permanence of the entente between these two Powers will benefit Germany also, because in the coming combination of Powers (*Konstellation*) each will soothe rather

than irritate one another, in all probability. I repeat that I am hoping confidently that this entente is not endangered, and I believe that they will settle the questions which concern them most easily and coolly, if no third Power takes part in the discussion.

I do not think it probable that the British and French Representatives in Tangier will treat the Sahara Question any more forcibly because their point of view is more one-sided, than the Ministers in London and Paris, who are in a position to weigh one interest against another. This is my reason for wishing to impart to you my views on the matter and I see no objection to your using one or other of the foregoing ideas as your own personal ones, in reply to suggestions of support on the part of your colleagues.

Finally, I request you to keep me informed regarding the further development of the affair.

*German Note.*

Prince Bismarck spoke in favour of the Anglo-French Entente also to the French Ambassador, Comte de Saint Vallier. (Cf. G. Pagès, *L'Hégémonie Allemande*, Vol. I, p. 176.)

### III. 401

DR. MORITZ BUSCH TO PRINCE HOHENLOHE, AMBASSADOR  
IN PARIS, *July 16th, 1881*

(*Draft in Holstein's handwriting.*)

I send you a cutting out of the Conservative paper, the *St. James's Gazette*, sub petitione remissionis. The Chancellor describes the article as being worth laying to heart. It discusses France's position as regards England and Germany in connection with the North African question. In case you may be able to speak to M. Barthélemy-St. Hilaire about it, Prince Bismarck requests you to renew the assurance that, though we may not be actually in alliance with France, as the *St. James's Gazette* suggests, she may yet rely throughout on our friendship and benevolence in the matter of her policy in Africa.

In connection with the above, Prince Bismarck adds that from the practical point of view of our interests, it would be quite right to say yes to the question raised in the passage in the Article marked with blue pencil on the first page. There is on the Mediterranean a wide field where we could allow France a free hand, and the Chancellor thinks there is room for hope that French policy may finally agree that a friendly German Empire with 45 million inhabitants may be more useful and a stronger outpost for France than a million Alsace-Lorrainers. France may be assured that we shall never oppose her justified policy of expansion on the

Mediterranean, and there is reason to suppose that Russia's attitude would be that of Germany. Under these circumstances France need pay no attention to England; for she is without allies. Her uncertain and revolutionary character will always leave her in isolation, which will injure permanently her power and prestige.

### III. 410

PRINCE BISMARCK TO KEUDELL, AMBASSADOR IN ROME,  
*April 6th, 1884*

#### *Extract.*

We are ready to support Italy, if she is attacked by France, or even seriously threatened by her. But to take action on anxieties not actually pressing, concerning interests which Italy hopes to possess at some time in Morocco, the Red Sea, Tunis, Egypt or any other part of the world, by ourselves opening negotiations with France, and to expose Europe to the possibility of a war on a very large scale, is a suggestion which no one can accept with equanimity, owing to the implied contempt of our and all other non-Italian interests.

#### *German Note.*

The Anglo-French Condominium on the Egyptian Question had, as is well known, been succeeded since the year 1882 by an undisguised British hegemony. France sought to escape from this most unwelcome situation in the spring of 1884 by means of an understanding with England (June 16th), which contemplated an extension of the financial powers of the not exclusively British Debt Commission and the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt at the beginning of 1888. In connection with this understanding a Conference of the European Powers on the financial position of Egypt had met in London on June 28th. At it the incompatibility of the British and French claims was immediately displayed, and on the 2nd of August the British Government declared it broken down, and abandoned it. The French Government would rather have seen the Conference adjourned, but she was not supported on this point with sufficient decision by the German, Austrian and Russian Delegates, who in other respects really favoured the French point of view.

[Shortly after the signing of the Three-Emperor Agreement at Skiernevice on September 17, 1884, Prince Bismarck found an opportunity of turning to account England's unpopularity in Europe over her action in Egypt.]

### III. 369

PRINCE HENRY OF REUSS, VIENNA, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*September 19th, 1884*

#### *Extract. Very confidential.*

In conversation with Count Kalnoky at Skiernevice after Your Highness' departure, His Majesty, the Tzar of Russia,

spoke of his fears lest the present British Ministry (Gladstone's) should fall.

Russia had found subject for nothing but satisfaction in the attitude of the Liberal Government, and even though the impolite behaviour of the British Delegates at the Conference of London, and also Mr. Gladstone's policy in the Egyptian Question could not meet with his approval, he would still regret it, if this statesman were to be replaced by a Tory Government.

Nevertheless, the Emperor Alexander was forced to admit that the Radical tendency, now dominating the British Government, contained a general menace to the Monarchical principle. For England was already hardly to be counted as a Monarchy, but rather as a Crown by election (*Wahlkönigreich*).

*German Note.*

The pretext for commencing negotiations regarding the Freedom of Trade in West Africa had been provided by the Anglo-Portuguese Congo Treaty of February 24th, 1884. It was followed by an exchange between the German and French Governments of suggestions regarding joint treatment of the Congo Question on the basis of freedom of commerce and equal rights. (See the following Despatch.)

III. 413

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, FOREIGN OFFICE,  
BERLIN, *August 7th, 1884*

I wish for a Report on the position of the negotiations regarding the regulation of West African trade conditions in connection with those of Eastern Asia.

Now that the Conference of London has failed, the moment seems favourable for commissioning Prince Hohenlohe to open confidential negotiations in Paris, which may bring the affair nearer to a practical issue. If France shows willingness, we might propose to her a draft common agreement, under which participants in the Treaty shall be granted freedom to trade with those coastal areas still under no European jurisdiction. Once we are in agreement with France upon the principles to be formulated on the analogy of Eastern Asia, we shall together be in a position to invite the adherence of England, Holland, Spain, Portugal and Belgium—or at any rate, one of the two last, supposing they fail to arrive at an agreement together,—anyhow, provisionally with those of them, that are inclined for it. It would be most desirable, if England's agreement could be obtained, but I scarcely think it probable. I believe, rather, that the British struggles to obtain an exclusive monopoly as far as possible, in non-European waters will force the other commercial nations to join together to provide a make-weight for the Colonial supremacy of England.



Prince Hohenlohe (Ambassador in Paris) should discuss these ideas cautiously with Ferry, for the breakdown of the Conference, and the way in which it happened, may have left him for the time in a receptive mood for our plans.

A similar necessity in the last century of guarding against English maritime aggressions gave rise to the so-called 'Armed Neutrality', by means of which nearly all the European States at that period aimed at curbing England's maritime supremacy by their joint action.

### III. 414

COUNT HATZFELDT, FOREIGN OFFICE, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*August 11th, 1884*

In conversation to-day with the French Ambassador, the question of trade conditions in West Africa came under discussion and I threw in the suggestion of a Franco-German understanding. Baron Courcel said that he believed that the French Government would gladly extend its hand to us for an agreement, although the question had its difficulties for France. Apart from the various claims made by other states upon sections of the coast of West Africa, France considered that she herself had a right to certain points, which had not in fact been effectively annexed as yet. I replied that it would only amount between us to an agreement in principle regarding the unclaimed territories. He knew by experience that we had never stood in the way of France's aspirations in other parts of the world. The claims of other states could be examined, when we had agreed on the principle for ourselves. Baron Courcel then asked how the expression 'freedom of trade' was to be understood. I replied absolute freedom, for in the only parts affected by this agreement, no one should have the right to make use of a tariff. We desired, first of all, to be in agreement with France; then to attract other Powers into our Agreement. Later on, the question of the position of Portugal and the International Association with regard to this Agreement would have to be considered.

England's accession to the (International Association) was most doubtful, for the British system entailed keeping others at a distance, whereas the object of the present association was to counteract the Colonial supremacy of England.

Baron de Courcel showed little interest, however, in any question save that of Egypt, and the rest of the conversation was confined to this subject.

After some consideration Baron Courcel said it all came round again to the question des écus, a question certainly worth discussing. But, according to French ideas French interests demanded that the situation should be considered from a higher

standpoint, bound up, indeed, with the whole future of Egypt. If England was to be allowed to take hold there without hindrance, she should naturally permit the nationals of other Powers to trade there as guests of England, even as in London, but in every transaction the lion's share would still be England's; and that was where the question touched France.

The question, next suggested by this ordre d'idées, was that of the future of the Commission of the Debt. What were our intentions in the matter?

I reminded him that we, as well as Russia, had stated our requirements at the Conference (viz., each to have a seat on the Commission). Whether we, now that the Conference had broken down, should restart the idea, had not yet been discussed, and I could not say anything definite about it.

The remainder of the conversation was spent in the attempt to decide what Power should take the initiative, neither Representative being willing to commit his own country to any course of action.

My general impression of this conversation is that we shall be able to prevail on the French to make positive proposals and even to take further action, if they consider themselves assured of the determined support of ourselves and our allies in face of England. In my humble opinion it would exercise a decisive influence with them, if we, after assuring ourselves of the agreement of Austria and Russia, say to the French that we and our Allies are prepared to adopt the French view regarding the maintenance of the Commission of the Debt, and will support it in the ensuing negotiations, whether they be with England or with the Khedive.

Remark by PRINCE BISMARCK: '*We can begin by expressing in Vienna and St. Petersburg the view that the status quo ante is not legally modified by the Conference, and that in point of fact the Commission of the Debt still stands as before, just as all other treaties regarding Egypt stand, and that we request confidentially the views of the two Cabinets on the question.*'

III. 418

COUNT WILLIAM VON BISMARCK, VARZIN, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, August 15th, 1884

His Highness wishes the following to be communicated to Baron Courcel by word of mouth.

~~The French suspicion that we shall start by supporting her and end by leaving her in the lurch is very evident for the rapprochement with France, that I have sought for years, is only hampered by mutual distrust. We are both helpless in the matter. We on our side, apart from historical memories, see a~~

further reason for suspicion in the fact that continuity of government is weaker in France than with us. If we could entirely trust even the present Government, it is not impossible that its successor might adopt an opposite policy in our disfavour, and yet not be untrue to itself. Our Monarchy offers more consistency than a Republic can, or even government by a Parliamentary majority. We cannot shut our eyes to the anxiety, lest France, when we should have together reached the point of actually or nearly breaking with England, take advantage of a change of Government to range herself on the side of England and leave us in isolation. We must not ignore this possibility. But if neither side is willing to overcome this distrust, we must definitely renounce jointly pursuing interests, which are common to us both.

It is repugnant to us to accept such a future for our mutual relations, and we cannot believe that France will continue to renounce her preponderance as very much the most powerful Continental Sea-Power, as long as the proportionate strength of her land forces allows her to make use of her Sea forces in a higher degree than is the case with England. France can reach a position of Power, perhaps of predominating power, if she will aim at leading the second-class Sea-Powers against England's maritime supremacy.

### III. 422-3

COUNT HATZFELDT, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *August 25th, 1884*

#### *Extract.*

The French Government would then consider fit that it should come to an understanding concerning the free navigation on the Niger, where otherwise the erection of barriers by the British is to be feared in the near future. (BISMARCK: '*Good.*')

In order to show how desirable it was for us also to defend ourselves against similar aggressions by the British, Baron Courcel cited the following example:—*Sur le Côte d'Or les Anglais occupent deux points extrêmes, entre lesquels ils n'admettent pas l'occupation par un tiers. La France a cependant occupé depuis plus de vingt ans quelques points dans cet espace libre, et l'Angleterre vient de nous rappeler par un acte sa manière de voir à ce sujet. A Paris on est sur le point de rejeter cette prétention de l'Angleterre.* (BISMARCK: '*Good.*')

La meme chose peut arriver à l'Allemagne.

Clause 4. Suez Canal. (BISMARCK: '*Case of unequal treatment.*') A policy such as the one proposed by Germany two

years ago; or else, to trust to the British promise regarding the freedom of the Canal.<sup>1</sup>

My impression is that Jules Ferry, out of Parliamentary considerations, does not wish to incur the reproach of having initiated a big action, but that he is nevertheless very ready to grasp the hand, if offered, and to join us and our Allies on the points above mentioned, as soon as he is sure that he can rely on us.

*German Note.*

At the Conference of London concerning Egypt the German Representative, Count Münster, had repeatedly demanded that the reform of sanitation in Egypt should be discussed; but the British Foreign Minister (Lord Granville) had each time found means to prevent its being mentioned.

III. 424

MEMORANDUM, BY PRINCE BISMARCK, *August 30th, 1884*

The first subject in my conversation with Baron Courcel was Egypt. The Ambassador's policy on this question was to wait upon events. Evidently the French Cabinet has not sufficient liking for, or deep-seated confidence in, its relations with Germany, to induce it to risk a break with England by an anti-British attitude on the Egyptian Question. . . .

With regard to the raising by Germany of the Question of Sanitation at the Conference of London, Baron Courcel believed that we should raise it again, and indicated that France would assist us. I replied that we did take at the Conference the measure of initiative required by our own interests, and that we suggested that the obligation to take further action lay with countries, such as France and Italy, which had already been exposed to the cholera peril. Baron Courcel complained especially because the predominating influence of England in the Canal was being misused to the extent of hampering the competition of rival trade undertakings; whilst British ships could get clean certificates of health, the ships of other nations were being purposely held up by the local Health Authorities. I asked him whether any facts regarding this unequal treatment could be proved. He was unable to say this, and we agreed that our agents should keep a watch on it, and inform us, when anything of the kind should occur.

Baron Courcel was more forthcoming on the subject of West Africa, and I concluded the following plan of operations regarding it.

We shall through Prince Hohenlohe inform the French Government that our most recent measures on that coast have brought us into closer touch with the French Colonies and settlements there,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Granville's Despatch of January 3rd, 1883.

and that we feel the necessity of coming to an understanding at once with France, and then with the other participating Powers as to the future form of these relations. At the same time we shall require to define our position regarding the Belgian enterprises on the Congo and those of de Brazza and Stanley. If the expedition of Nachtigal, our Consul-General, comes into touch with the possessions or the policy of France at any points on that coast, our next task will be to arrive at an agreement regarding it, and to withdraw any measures clashing with France's position as sovereign Power.

Herr Nachtigal's instructions cannot be other than general in character, owing to lack of knowledge of the latest information regarding the most recent territorial developments on that coast, and it is not at all our intention to interfere with the rights and interests of friendly nations. I am of opinion that, when Nachtigal's written reports at length arrive, there will be several points in them, on which we shall have to refuse absolutely claims raised by him. There shall on this count be no subject for difference of opinion between the two Governments. France possesses a solid coastal strip in the Gaboon and intends to acquire a connection with the Congo above the Falls starting from the Gaboon up the Ogowe and down a tributary of the Congo. France is favourable to the Belgian enterprises on the Congo, and intends to admit into future demarcations of state territories the posts occupied by de Brazza on the right bank of the Congo. De Brazza and Stanley have made a provisional arrangement on this point. For this concession France demands full liberty to trade in the whole of the future Congo State and the known right of pre-emption, and would be ready to promise us that Germany should be assured likewise for ever of this freedom to trade, even allowing for the right of pre-emption. .'. .

I have agreed with Baron Courcel that the Imperial Government shall shortly in Paris declare its willingness to agree with France on the principles to be observed, and that, after agreement both Governments shall invite the rest of the participating Powers, viz. Spain, Portugal, England, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Italy and the United States to a Conference for the purpose of entering into our understanding. I suggested Paris as the place, but Baron Courcel preferred Berlin. . . .

*German Note.*

The Congo Conference opened in Berlin on November 15th, 1884, and finished on February 26th, 1885, with the adoption of the 'General Act'.

[It enacted freedom of trade for all nations, placed the River under an International Commission, defined the status of the Congo Free State and bound the Powers to suppress slavery throughout Africa.]

[In September, 1884, France became suspicious that the British

Government was encouraging the Egyptians to appropriate illegally for the ordinary current deficit account a part of the money earmarked under the Law of Liquidation. This suspicion was, as shown in the *Life of Lord Granville* (II, 335) not without foundation.]

### III. 428-9

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HATZFELDT, FOREIGN OFFICE, BERLIN,  
*September 22nd, 1884*

To-day Baron Courcel received a despatch from Paris on the Egyptian Question. It contains the following words:—

'Article 38 of the Law of Liquidation and, above all, the Decree of May 2nd, 1876, which set up the Caisse de la Dette, confers on the Commissioners the right of prosecuting the financial administration before the Courts, in the event of the rights of the Caisse being ignored. The French Government intends to make use of this prerogative, (BISMARCK: '*With justification.*') and it calls upon the two other Powers, Austria and Italy, represented on the Commission, to do likewise.' (BISMARCK: '*Inform Vienna that we support this view, so that trust in Treaties be not sunk in oblivion.*')

The above indicates that the French Government believe that this means will not suffice to turn the Egyptian Government from the path it has chosen under the advice of England, unless the Signatory Powers combine in supporting with determination the Commission in its relations with the Government of Egypt. (BISMARCK: '*Support to be given.*') To this end the French Government is sounding each of these Powers (with the exception of England), as to their readiness for a collective démarche in Cairo. (BISMARCK: '*Meo voto yes.*') . . .

To this information the French Ambassador added that in the opinion of his Government '*les circonstances nous offrent un nouveau terrain légal et circonscrit, où l'entente entre la France et l'Allemagne peut se faire sur des intérêts communs.*' (BISMARCK: '*Yes.*')

The French Ambassador's confidential utterances, which evidently proceed out of the despatch which reached him to-day, make it clear that the French Government is sure that the Courts will give judgment against the Egyptian Government; in which case it considers fit to anticipate that the Anglo-Egyptian side will place obstacles in the way of the judgment being carried out. The Powers could hardly be expected to countenance this, and France considers that a preliminary agreement with us would be desirable and would proceed further on this course, once begun, if she were sure of our moral and political support. (BISMARCK: '*Yes.*')

If Your Highness thinks fit to follow up the present rapprochement with France, which I believe to be genuinely intended,

the understanding desired by the French Government would commence by our agreement with the proposed collective *démarche* in Cairo and our engagement to use our influence in this sense with the other Signatory Powers, Italy and the Porte in particular. (BISMARCK : '*Preferably not Italy ; but the Porte, Russia, Austria.*') In accordance with this we should, supposing that in spite of the common *démarche* the efficiency of the Courts were still interfered with, combine with France in expressing our view that the freedom of the Courts, as guaranteed by the Treaties, must be upheld.

It may be advisable to repeat at this juncture the advice, which has been several times offered tentatively to the French :— To call a Conference in Paris to settle the Egyptian Question. It appears to me far from improbable, considering the difficulties with which the English have to contend, that even they, when face to face with the combined Powers, may finally accept this way out of the present complications, as the least dangerous to themselves.

### III. 430

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HATZFELD, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*September 24th, 1884*

In accordance with Your Highness' marginal notes, I discussed Egyptian affairs with Baron Courcel to-day.

He is delighted that our views agree with those of France, and sees in the fact that we are prepared to support the collective *démarche* by the Signatory Powers in Cairo, which is desired by the French, a proof of our willing friendship and a basis for a wider entente. He is to report to Paris in this sense.

Directly he receives his instructions with regard to West Africa, the Ambassador intends to leave for Paris. He seems to assume that Ferry will on his part discuss Egyptian affairs with Count Herbert Bismarck and evidently would like to be present at the interview.

With regard to our support of the French *démarche* with the Signatory Powers, Baron Courcel thinks it desirable that besides the instructions, which we mean to forward to our Representative in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Constantinople (and which have meanwhile been despatched) we should also inform our Missions with the other Powers (BISMARCK : '*Which are these ?*') which have agreed to the Liquidation Law, of our attitude. As this desire seemed to be in agreement with Your Highness' instructions, I promised its fulfilment. (BISMARCK : '*Right.*')

[The desire of Germany and France to frustrate the British plans without risk of injury to themselves is shown in the following extracts from the correspondence of Prince Bismarck and his son, Count Herbert.]

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, IN PARIS.  
*Telegrams, 5th and 6th October, 1884.*

*Say to M. Ferry:*—We have an equal interest with France in avoiding an actual break—in fact, war—with England, and in settling the Egyptian Question peaceably. War between England and France, even if we were not involved in it, would be no less a calamity to us than one between Russia and Austria. Let Ferry believe our word that we are sincerely anxious to avert it, and to see the Egyptian Question peaceably settled.

The latter can be effected without ceasing to observe the Treaties or to defend the interests of Europe in the Suez Canal.

### III. 431

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, PARIS, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*October 6th, 1884*

#### *Extract.*

I said to M. Ferry how pleased we also were 'que les circonstances offraient un nouveau terrain légal et circonscrit où notre entente pouvait se faire sur des intérêts communs'.

M. Ferry replied that the only means that he could think of for doing away with England's claims and aggressive policy in Egypt was by resolute action by the Combined Powers. The appeal to the International Tribunals had already inspired the English with salutary fear. It was surprising how soft-spoken and honeyed the British Government had become just lately. But it was once again playing a double game. He (M. Ferry) knew well that England was agitating the great financial houses, and especially the Rothschilds, and was giving them to understand that the Egyptian Loans would become valueless, and the bondholders would lose everything, if the British Government were to be driven to extremities. This he learned from utterances by von Bleichroeder, who was, so to speak, an agent of the Rothschilds. The financiers were now really anxious and were trying to modify the French Government's attitude towards England. I remarked that, according to former statements made by British Ministers to M. Barrère, as the latter lately informed me, there had been suggested in London the possibility that the Mixed Tribunals might be summarily done away with, if they condemn the Egyptian Government to pay, as indeed they could not legally avoid doing. M. Ferry was absolutely dumfounded by this news. He cried: 'Ah, mais ceci serait très sérieux!' It would be a slap in the face for us, which we could certainly not put up with. Nothing is impossible to the English, when one considers the policy hitherto, rushed as it was from one extreme to the other, now unnecessarily weak, now



incredibly brusque, as though the strongest Power in the world was behind it. If they indulged in such reckless and violent actions, they would sensibly injure their position in the opinion of Europe.

I admitted this and said that I had said the same to Lord Hartington, explaining that the European Treaties formed a solid whole. If England began by herself to put part of this whole out of action, all the other Powers might follow her example. England would lose everyone's confidence. Such action, which might involve consequences,—in fact, the breaking of treaties,—when they became inconvenient, would put the whole international basis of present-day States into the melting-pot.

Nevertheless, we must be prepared for some such coup de tête of this kind on the part of England. M. Ferry did not deny this, but he was visibly disturbed by the idea. He asked: 'What does your Government intend to do next with regard to Egypt?' 'We desire,' I replied, 'merely to maintain our connection with you, and to take all steps whatever in common with you.'

M. Ferry put in: 'That means—in common with the Imperial Powers'. I declared this as understood, since we never dissociated ourselves from the allied Emperors, and when M. Ferry announced that his policy regarding Egypt was very simple, and merely insisted on substituting the international theory for the selfish British one, I added: 'Russia is determined to stand by us, and merely desires this and also to make certain that Mr. Gladstone's Government is held at the beck and call of the Continental Entente. We also strongly desire this. We consider it equally to our interest to keep Mr. Gladstone in power.'

M. Ferry's relief was manifested by the tone of his reply. He said: 'Certainly, this is of the greatest importance to the participants. I am delighted to hear it from you, for Gladstone is the only British Minister, who takes seriously the British promise of evacuating Egypt, and whom we have merely to hold to his word.'

I remarked: 'I am very glad we have discussed this subject, for I know that it has been dinned into you from all sides that the one object of German policy was to overthrow Gladstone. This is quite untrue. In fact, it is the Imperial Chancellor's opinion that every Power, except England herself, must earnestly desire for its own interest to keep Mr. Gladstone in office.'

M. Ferry laughed heartily at this remark, and fully assented to its correctness. I continued: 'You perhaps concluded your Agreement in June, under the impression created by Lord Hartington's utterances at the time, that Mr. Gladstone's power

was shattered. England may regret to-day not having agreed to it then.' M. Ferry admitted that the French concessions were then excessive, and that he had been sharply attacked in France for it. 'Now, however, we must show the English our teeth.' . . .

*German Note.*

The reference is to the negotiations between England and France regarding the preliminary conditions and principles for the London Conference on Egyptian affairs, which ended on June 16th, 1884, and which failed to assure a successful issue for the Conference. (Cf. p. 131.)

Baron Courcel had said to me in the morning that the only means of clearing England out of Egypt would lie in widening the powers of the Commission of the Debt, after Germany and Russia should have agreed to it, so that it should actually control the administration of Egypt. England's single vote would thus be completely swamped.

At the same time the Sultan should let us have some energetic Albanian General, as War Minister, to maintain order strictly. A man of this sort could easily do it with 1,000 Circassians and Albanians. It would then matter little whether Tewfik or any other man of straw were Khedive. I spoke in this sense to M. Ferry, who seemed to take greatly to the idea of the Sultan as figurehead and a European Commission of Control. 'Anarchy,' he said, 'would only become possible in Egypt, three years after the Circassians had been removed from the Egyptian Army. We made a great mistake in 1882 in refusing to combine with England to suppress anarchy in Egypt. But that is now a thing of the past, and it is no use wasting words over it. The Condominium, in itself a risky arrangement, is gone for ever. We do not wish to monopolise Egypt, but we cannot allow England to do so, and must hand it over to Europe.'

M. Ferry, as well as Baron Courcel, had begun by asking me whether I had seen Mr. Gladstone or Lord Granville. I was able to deny this, but I mentioned that I had only met Lord Hartington, when shooting in Scotland. To him I quoted an opinion expressed to me by Dilke, to the effect that England could not without a second Conference emerge from her difficulties, and added that Dilke had said the same to Barrère. If the French Government approved of summoning such a Conference in Paris, it might count on our co-operation in the matter. . . .

No Conference, said M. Ferry, whose direct object was not the immediate evacuation of Egypt, was of the least help to France.

## III. 438

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, PARIS, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*October 7th, 1884*

*Extract.*

Baron Courcel said: 'Suspicion grew to a head chiefly owing to the stage of German policy, in which you always replied to our questions regarding your attitude on Egypt, by saying that you were not directly interested in the question, and that our sole course was to come to an understanding with England. (BISMARCK: "*We had then greater confidence in England's wisdom.*") This caused us to imagine that you wished to keep your hands free, and were preparing some unpleasant surprise for us. But now, since the failure of our last very forthcoming attempt to agree with England à deux at the Conference (of London), we are obliged to seek the support of Europe. Our mutual compact to agree together beforehand on all démarches, where Egypt is concerned, has removed these suspicions, which can never be renewed, if only you will not silently leave us to face England alone again.

The British Government will now bitterly regret not accepting the Waddington proposals (of June, 1884), for such favourable conditions will never be obtainable by her a second time.'

[In January, 1885, the French made certain proposals to the British Government, first submitting them for Prince Bismarck's approval. On January 21st the British Government accepted two of them: (1) a European guarantee for a loan of 9 millions at 3 per cent. and (2) an understanding regarding the freedom of the Suez Canal navigation.

The fall of the Ferry Government in March, 1885, in combination, perhaps, with the ill-success of the French arms in Tonking, caused Prince Bismarck to review his policy regarding relations with France and England.]

## III. 445

PRINCE BISMARCK TO PRINCE HOHENLOHE, AMBASSADOR IN  
PARIS, *May 25th, 1885*

*Extract.*

From a conversation that I held with Baron Courcel I received the impression that we ought not to overestimate the determined attitude of the French Government against England. Baron Courcel had more of this temper than his own Government had. No such courage, however, can be expected from the present Government, for it cannot count on its majority, especially if it appears to be friendly to us.

We also cannot afford to embroil ourselves with England more than is necessary, owing to the danger that France may betray us with England. . . . We must never lose sight of the fact

that our interest in Egypt is insignificant, but that our relations towards France and England in Europe are of great importance to us. We must not make enemies of either Power without good reason, and we can neither favour any rapprochement between them, nor inflame their mutual animosity to the point of war. Nor do I think that we can reckon on the support of either of these maritime Powers, in the event of our finding ourselves at war with the other.

These considerations lead me to favour an attitude of cautious reserve, and if France is inclined to be content with a small, but positive advantage out of the Conference (the Sucz-Canal Commission sitting in Paris) we must not stand in the way, if we would avoid being suspected of calculations dangerous to peace.

### III. 449

COUNT HATZFELDT, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO  
PRINCE HOHENLOHE IN PARIS, *June 4th, 1885*

#### *Extract.*

The Chancellor discussed with Lord Rosebery, at the time of his visit, the affairs of Egypt. He said that it was untrue that Germany had tried to sow discord between England and France. The fault of the situation had been that the English never knew what they wanted, or else never expressed it. Our efforts had always been directed towards an understanding between the two states, but could not be successful, so long as British policy was constantly changing. If the British intended to stay in Egypt, they ought to inform the French of it frankly and offer them something in compensation; but if they meant to leave, they should make proposals of some kind regarding the maintenance of order and existing conditions, so that their departure should not be followed by anarchy. England would hardly be in a position to hold the country unaided. There were not so many British troops to spare, and the Egyptians had been proved to be inferior, when commanded by British officers, but good under Mohamedan officers. England would not accept Frenchmen there, and France would not stand Italians. Turkish forces would only be forthcoming if money were offered to the Sultan. At this point the Chancellor repeated his old vade-mecum of an understanding between England and France; the two States should cement their understanding by seeking the support of the three Imperial Powers, and then make combined proposals to the Sultan, along with an offer of financial assistance, so as to ensure every prospect of their being acceptable.

## CHAPTER X

### ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1879-80

#### TENTATIVE OVERTURES FOR AN ALLIANCE

[At the time when Prince Bismarck was preparing to transfer Germany's friendship from Russia to Austria-Hungary in the autumn of 1879, he was anxious to ascertain what attitude the British Government would take up regarding it. (Cf. p. 101.)]

##### *German Note.*

After the Berlin Congress of 1878 the Russian Government had addressed more and more peremptory demands to Germany, requiring her complete subservience to Russian policy in the East. This furnished Prince Bismarck with a reason for opening negotiations with Count Andrássy with a view to a German-Austro-Hungarian alliance. It was thenceforward Prince Bismarck's intention to maintain as friendly as possible relations with Russia, in spite of the favour extended to Austria. Nevertheless, he was obliged to consider the possibility that the change in Germany's policy might lead to serious disagreements with her Eastern neighbour. Thus it was important to him to discover how England would behave in this event. Hence the enquiry made of Lord Beaconsfield by Count Münster, the German Ambassador, which is, however, not to be regarded as an offer of alliance, as has been done in Buckle's *Life of Lord Beaconsfield* (Vol. VI, 486 et seq.). In the long run, however, as Prince Bismarck's efforts to maintain the friendship with Russia approached success in spite of Germany's nearer relations with Austria-Hungary, the British connection lost its importance for him, and the matter was allowed to drop.<sup>1</sup>

##### *German Note.*

A former overture for an Alliance, originating with Bismarck early in 1876, had suffered a similar fate; in that case, however, it was England who let the matter drop. Equally on that occasion the British statesmen had again not quite correctly taken the Rapprochement, sought for by Bismarck in the Eastern Question, in conversation with Lord Odo Russell on January 3rd, for an offer of Alliance. (Cf. p. 20.) Münster reported on January 12th, 1876, that Lord Derby, alluding to Prince Bismarck's overtures, had, word for word, said that 'since he had been Foreign Minister, he had received no communication that had given him greater pleasure, and about which he had felt greater satisfaction. He had a downright admiration for Your Highness, and considered a rapprochement between England and Germany to be the only right policy.' These two 'were the only States having, as far as he knew, no divergent

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Lord Salisbury's 'Life', II, 367-9.

interests'. These pleasant expressions, repeated though they were by Lord Derby several times in the first half of 1876, were not the last word in the matter. Lord Beaconsfield admitted without question in 1879 that Bismarck's efforts towards a nearer understanding with England at that time were destroyed by England alone. 'That proposal (of an alliance with Great Britain) was not only rejected by the English Secretary of State, but was only notified by him to his colleagues, accompanied by his opinion, that it could not for a moment be entertained.'

#### IV. 6

RADOWITZ OF THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO COUNT MÜNSTER,  
IN LONDON, *September 16th, 1879*

*Extract. Very secret.*

An important factor in the decisions that we shall have to take here (Berlin) will be the attitude adopted by England.

There is no need to explain that no direct German interests are necessarily stopping us from giving in to the wishes of Russia concerning our support of her Eastern policy. Our decision will be based absolutely on our special regard for our friendship for Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, if we refuse to yield to Russian pressure in that direction. But before we adopt any such policy, we must know what we may expect from England, supposing we become involved in discussions with our Eastern neighbour on this account.

[On September 27th Count Münster visited Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden, and on the same day each made his report. For Lord Beaconsfield's 'Memorandum for Queen Victoria', see Buckle's *Life of him*, Vol. VI, p. 486 seq.]

*German Note.*

Münster's and Beaconsfield's accounts differ widely in one respect; Beaconsfield described the matter, as though the German Ambassador had under Bismarck's direct instructions mentioned a defensive Alliance between Germany, Austria and England as his object, and as though he, Lord Beaconsfield, were against such an Alliance owing to the close relations existing between England and France. According to Count Münster, on the contrary, it was the British Prime Minister who opened the question of an Alliance and in the same breath approved of it. Count Münster's version is intrinsically the more probable, for he was never charged to mention the question of an Alliance. It is supported further by a private letter from the Ambassador to Radowitz (September 27th) in which he wrote: 'At the first word, which I spoke concerning the possibility of the cooling off of good relations with Russia, Lord Beaconsfield said to me that his constant hope and aim had been an intimate understanding and a close Alliance with Germany.' Moreover, Lord Beaconsfield's letters to Lord Salisbury of October 1st and 9th<sup>2</sup> prove that he fully realised

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Beaconsfield's 'Life', VI, 487. Also on p. 22 for certain expressions of Lord Derby's on February 15th, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> See Beaconsfield's 'Life', Vol. VI, pp. 489, 490.

the point of Bismarck's question—whether in the event of European complications England would decide 'not to be neutral and non-interfering, but to act, and to act with allies'. In his 'Memorandum for Queen Victoria' he had carefully shirked this point. His remark to Lord Salisbury, that in his conversation with Count Munster he had purposely avoided the word 'treaty', is characteristic. Yet he expressly declared it to be worth considering 'whether some treaty between the three Allies, not formally and avowedly for the great object, but with reference to some practical point connected with it might not be expedient'. Hans Pley'n's *Bismarck's Foreign Policy after the Foundation of the Empire* contains an important reference to the use of the word 'Alliance' in this connection. (P. 164 et seq.)

## IV. 7

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *September 27th, 1879*

*Very secret.*

I have just returned from Hughenden, Lord Beaconsfield's country house. I was quite alone with him and found yesterday and to-day opportunities for talking to him without interruption. He excused himself for not having been able to receive me sooner, but he had wished to get me quite alone.

When I had explained the object of my visit in a few words, Lord Beaconsfield promised the fullest discretion and reserve. He began by saying that he had given much consideration to the present European situation. He could not deny that he saw with some satisfaction how Russia, dazzled and possessed by the utterly senseless Pan-Slavism, was driving her old Allies from her and was apparently giving up the Three-Emperor Alliance, which really had been profitable to Russia. England required and desired Allies, in order to be able to intervene in European affairs. A policy of Non-intervention was unpractical and in the long run impossible for a country, which was conscious of its own power. It began with Cobden and his followers, who had done as much harm in politics with their 'Non-intervention at any Price' as with their 'Free Trade without Reciprocity'. The most natural Allies for England were Germany and Austria. He would enter with joy into an Alliance with Germany. The main problems in this respect were France and the possibility of a Russo-French Alliance. But on this very point he could give me an absolute assurance. France would never attack Germany, so long as she saw that England would treat it as a casus belli, and that Germany, who had all she required from France, regarding the safety of her frontiers, would never take aggressive action against France was equally evident.

I told the Minister that I was very pleased to hear this view. It was too serious a matter for us not to watch all eventualities carefully. Amongst these I counted the future position of the

Crown and the Opposition and I asked for his opinion on this point.

'As far as the Crown is concerned, you may be quite easy,' he continued. 'Her Majesty knows only of one enemy of England, and that is Russia. She desires nothing more earnestly than a full understanding with Germany. In that quarter also you are quite safe.'

I said—what about the Prince of Wales, whose great French sympathies are known?

Lord Beaconsfield jokingly said: 'You are right. The Prince has a certain amount of sympathy with the French, but even more for the French ladies. But these sympathies are less deeply rooted than his dislike, nay almost hatred, for Russia. Therefore, if it were a question of a possible war between France and Germany alone, he might perhaps side with the French, but a war against Russia and France would find the Prince on the side of Germany.' (BISMARCK: '*That is a Vienna recipe.*')

Lord Beaconsfield's observations on the Party question and the Opposition were also most interesting. He could, he said, answer for his Party's support, so long as British policy firmly pursued this course; politically speaking, the Tories were the Party of action and wished to uphold the influence of England in Europe and to resist that of Russia, which alone they regarded as injurious.

As regarded the Liberals, the Manchester School (the Free Traders and Non-interventionists), who had been in power under Gladstone, they would never again establish a firm footing in England. He would not say outright that his own Party would remain in power for ever, but they could certainly count on another five or six years of Office. (He was heavily defeated in the Spring of the next year, 1880.) He meant soon to choose the best moment for an Election, and even if a few seats were lost, he still expected to keep a good working majority. Should the Election not so turn out, it would not be a Radical Government, but some sort of Coalition Ministry with the old Whigs, and they would permit no alteration, as far as Foreign policy was concerned. With the mass of the people an Alliance with Germany was the most popular, and the Free Trade-Peace ideas of the Cobden-Bright School were being more and more abandoned.

Lord Beaconsfield begged to be remembered to Your Highness in the most friendly manner. He is thankful that Your Highness charged me to speak to him so openly. 'Write to the Prince,' he said to me on my departure this morning, 'that, if we agree together, I consider European peace to be assured for a long time to come; if the Prince will help us in the East, where the interests of England go hand in hand with those of Austria, we will under-



take to prevent France from moving in case this policy should involve Germany in trouble with Russia. We will in that case keep France quiet. You may depend on us.<sup>1</sup> ✓

Lord Beaconsfield promised me to keep our conversation secret from his colleagues for the present, but said that it would be well for Your Highness to authorise me to speak in this sense to Lord Salisbury, and hoped that we should soon reach an easy understanding in a really practical form.

I had suspected beforehand that Lord Beaconsfield would receive our overtures in a forthcoming spirit, but I hardly expected the decided and far-reaching assurances, which he gave me. I am also convinced that he is really sincere in this case.

#### IV. 10

RADOWITZ, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO COUNT MÜNSTER,  
IN LONDON, *October 8th, 1879*

*Secret.*

Lord Beaconsfield's reply to you does not completely fulfil Prince Bismarck's expectations.

The question which we put was: What will England do if we have trouble with Russia owing to our refusal to support Russian policy in the East merely out of consideration for the friendly Powers, England and Austria, and without any compelling interests of our own?

It is evident that, if in such a case we could rely absolutely on England's active and armed support against Russia, our position would be altered, and we should be far better able to offer continuous resistance to Russian suggestions. But if we are not *completely* assured of this promise, we have all the more reason to avoid a conflict with Russia and to stand clear of any dispute about Eastern affairs, which might drive us into a break with her.

If, as Lord Beaconsfield said, England is willing to limit herself, in the event of a war between ourselves and Russia, to keeping her eye on France, it is, no doubt, a very welcome assistance, but yet not sufficient to make the prospect of a Russian war endurable to us. Apart from the chances of the fight, war between us and Russia is a calamity for us, even if France did not take part. Only in the extreme case, if the greatest interests are involved, and we are absolutely protected in rear, can we afford to enter into this struggle.

The Imperial Chancellor begs you not to approach Lord Beaconsfield on this question for the moment, so as to avoid any appearance of being in need of more complacency on the part of the British Cabinet, or of seeking to get more out of it. At the same time, Lord Beaconsfield ought not to remain under the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 101.

impression, as indicated in your report of his answer, that he has made definite offers, encouraged by which we may prepare to take upon ourselves all that a break with Russia may involve. I must leave it to your judgment to determine how far such an impression exists.

## IV. II

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 14th, 1879*

I understand from the despatch of October 8th that Lord Beaconsfield's reply does not altogether correspond with Your Highness' expectations.

I am convinced that it is Lord Beaconsfield's intention to give the most satisfactory declaration, and regards it as understood that if Germany and Austria become involved in dealings with Russia regarding questions which also touch British and Austrian interests, England will take an active part.

He sees that England must take part in a European war in Turkey in Europe necessarily and unavoidably—this he said to me several times—if England is to retain her proper influence in the East.

Lord Beaconsfield believes that Your Highness will above all recognise the necessity of being protected against a Franco-Russian alliance, and that you can count on England's support in that event.

A war against Russia would always be popular here and without risk to England, but the possibility of a war with France would be thought a far more serious matter and be faced much less willingly by the nation.

I am quite aware that much more binding and decided declarations would be needed, before we bind ourselves fast to England, which must always be treated with great caution on account of her Party system, or expose ourselves to the calamity which a Russian war would mean to us in any case.

I did not wish to lay stress on the possibility of war with Russia in the Far East only, as I wished to avoid having the question put by Lord Beaconsfield, 'What would Germany do, supposing England were to have trouble with Russia in Asia, Afghanistan and Persia?'

I think I may express my conviction that Lord Beaconsfield sets the greatest value upon an Alliance with Germany, (BISMARCK:—'Really!') and that we can count firmly on the support of him and his Party.

I do not know if Lord Beaconsfield has mentioned our conversation to Lord Salisbury, but judging from the way in which the latter spoke to me, I should assume that he has done so.

## IV. 12

COUNT MÜNSTER, NEAR HANOVER, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*October 17th, 1879*

I could not report further from London on my conversation with Lord Salisbury,<sup>1</sup> because it only took place at his wish at Hatfield on Wednesday evening, and I had to leave London early yesterday morning in order to fulfil my public engagements here (ständisch). I think therefore that I may address this letter to your Highness at Varzin. Lord Salisbury invited me as he could not come on that day, to lunch with him at Hatfield, as he required to meet me before I left for Germany.

He told me Lord Beaconsfield had informed him of my conversation with him, and had asked him to assure me once more that Lord Beaconsfield and his Cabinet would always stand by Germany if ever Germany became involved in trouble with Russia. Lord Salisbury said to me that he was especially pleased at the course that political relations between England and Germany seemed now to be taking and begged me to inform Your Highness how greatly he desired a strong bond between Germany and Austria, and an alliance between England and these two Powers.

He considered that the wedge driven against Russia by Austria's situation in European Turkey was a very important result of the Congress, and an assurance against Russian aggressions in the East. It made peace certain, so long as Russia knew that Germany and England were determined to defend Austria against attack. I enquired whether in that event England would join in the war and was answered in a decided affirmative. He then mentioned the possibility of a Franco-Russian Alliance and again said, as I mentioned in a recent report, that he was certain that attempts had been made from the side of Russia to prepare the way for an understanding of this kind. Reliance could be placed in this Government, but it was unsafe at present to reckon on France politically; therefore Germany should appreciate the fact that she could rely on England in such an event. He assured me of this, as far as this Cabinet was concerned, and he believed that even a Liberal Cabinet would act similarly, but did not consider a change of Government likely for a few years.

Lord Salisbury knew for certain that Russia had tried for an alliance with Italy also, and that for a moment there had been hesitation there. He had heard of it and had declared distinctly that in that case England would oppose Italy, upon

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Salisbury's Report of this in Lord Beaconsfield's 'Life', VI, p. 491.

which the Italian Government had abandoned the idea then as they realised the attitude of France, on which they had been reckoning. Lord Salisbury did not in this connection show much respect for Italy.

As regarded any clash of interests between Russia and England in Central Asia, England could look after herself. The Russian Steppes were the best rampart. For England the nearest base for operations was always on the sea. Moreover, according to every report received by him from Persia by way of Afghanistan and India, the Russian failure had been such as to force them to put off for a year at least the projected Expedition to Merv.

Lord Salisbury begged me to inform Your Highness of this personally or to bring it to your knowledge by some very safe channel.

Your Highness will judge from this action of Lord Salisbury's, which happened entirely without suggestion from me (I purposely maintained absolute reserve and after my conversation with Lord Beaconsfield, allowed the British Ministers to approach me) the importance attached by Lord Beaconsfield and his Cabinet to a rapprochement with Germany.

*German Note.*

At the end of March, 1880, the Liberal Party under Mr. Gladstone came into power. Bismarck's dissatisfaction with Lord Beaconsfield's policy had been growing for some time. He was also irritated by Lord Salisbury's description of the conclusion of the German-Austro-Hungarian Treaty in his speech at Manchester on October 17th, 1879, as being 'good tidings of great joy', and even more so by his indiscreet enquiry of Count Karolyi, the Austrian Ambassador, 'whether the agreement was a written one'.<sup>1</sup> According to a letter written by Count Otto von Stolberg to Radewitz on November 8th, it was only in consequence of Lord Salisbury's speech that the German Government had abstained from itself making a fuller communication to the British Government regarding the conclusion of the Alliance, and had concerned itself with the communications to be made by Austria. In a despatch to Lord Granville (May 29th, 1880), Lord Odo Russell, British Ambassador in Berlin, made a graphic and pointed reflection on the attempt at an Alliance in 1879 with the words—'Bismarck then gave up all hopes of securing the alliance of England and turned to France'.<sup>2</sup>

*German Note.*

Gladstone's impassioned Election speeches against the Turks, 'that unhuman exception to the human race', made it henceforth evident that the new Cabinet would act with all decision against Turkey and to this end would not shrink from closer relations with Russia.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 127-9, and Lord Salisbury's Report to Queen Victoria, October 27th, 1879, in Lord Beaconsfield's 'Life', Vol. VI, p. 492.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Granville's 'Life', Vol. II, p. 211.

## IV. 14

COUNT MÜNSTER TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*April 30th, 1880*

Lord Granville received the Diplomatic Corps. He repeated to me his assurance that his first wish was to maintain friendly relations with Germany. He considered that a strong Germany meant happiness for Europe. He saw a pledge of peace in Germany's understanding with Austria. The British Cabinet was firm on the basis of the Berlin Treaty, but regretted that all stipulations had not been carried out. Lord Granville hoped that with Germany's agreement and support every effort would be made to secure complete fulfilment of this Treaty.

He intended in a few days to give me his views on the question of Greece.

COUNT MÜNSTER, AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, TO THE GERMAN  
FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 12th, 1880*

Lord Granville informed me that he intended to address a Circular to the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty and propose that a Conference of Ambassadors, along with a body of experts should meet either in Berlin or Paris in order to bring about a settlement of the dispute between Greece and Turkey and to fix the boundary. Lord Salisbury's was a failure owing to the ill-will of the Turks, and Lord Granville hoped for a quicker solution on these lines.

*German Note.*

The Conference mentioned above met at Berlin on June 16th, 1880, under the Chairmanship of Prince Hohenlohe, the Ambassador, and ended on July 1st. For the Proceedings, cf. the British Blue Book, 'Greece, No. 3' (1880), (C. 2633); the French Yellow Book, *Affaires de Grèce en 1880*. De Martens—*Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités*, II Série, Vol. VI, p. 95 seq.—gives the Protocols of the Conference. At the final session it was decided to address a Collective Note to Turkey and Greece, to be forwarded to the Doyens of the Corps Diplomatique at Constantinople and Athens respectively, inviting these two Powers to agree to the recommendation of the Conference Powers, assigning all Thessaly and a great part of Epirus to Greece.

## IV. 16

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 27th, 1880*

*Extract. Very confidential.*

Lord Granville said that the British Cabinet wished to avoid, if possible, any measures of compulsion against Turkey, but was quite determined to adopt them, if the Porte, contrary to expectation, should resist the expressed and unanimous will of the Great Powers, and if war should break out between Greece and Turkey.

As I appeared surprised and incredulous at this very decided speech, Lord Granville said: 'I know that both here and abroad we are quite wrongly supposed to be in favour of Peace at any price. We attacked Lord Beaconsfield and his Government sharply, because his foreign policy was all bark and no bite.'

The Minister added the following considerations:—

If the Eastern Question did not soon again become a danger to Europe, the Porte and the Ottoman Empire could still be kept in existence, but this would only be possible, if the Great Powers carried out the decisions of the Berlin Congress. The British Government considered itself bound to this and would do its part. It held that all the Great Powers could not permit Turkey to continue to give promises and not keep them, thus spurning the advice of Europe. If the many open wounds were not to be healed, the process of freeing Turkey would come too soon, and the situation, which Austria seemed to fear so greatly, would be realised.

*German Note.*

A proposal was made later (October 4th, 1880) by the British Government to send a European Fleet to Smyrna and to occupy the Town and Harbour as a material guarantee. This proposal was received unfavourably by the German Government. Bismarck would not hear of conferring the mandate of Europe upon England. On the margin of a telegram from Count Münster (October 10th), reporting the desire of England to this effect, he wrote: 'No. We shall maintain a benevolent attitude and shall be delighted at any success, but we are doubtful of this; therefore we shall give no mandate.'<sup>1</sup> The general line of German policy, which in view of the conflicting interests of England, Russia and Austria, demanded the greatest caution, is shown by a few extracts from a General Instruction drawn up at Friedrichsruh.

DRAFT OF A GENERAL INSTRUCTION FOR THE ATTITUDE OF  
GERMAN POLICY IN EASTERN AFFAIRS, *November 7th, 1880*

*Extract.*

In the first place our Eastern policy aims at maintaining peace. We also have to fear wars between other Powers on account of their inevitable reaction on our economic interests and equally so because we can never foresee how far we may be drawn into foreign troubles. . . .

We need especially the maintenance of peace between Austria and Russia; for a break between these two states, our nearest neighbours, would always be an embarrassment for us, and sooner or later we should have to choose between the two, even if we had no direct *casus foederis*. In connection with this, German Policy in the East generally has another task, namely, to prevent co-operation between England and Russia. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II, p. 216, etc.

Gladstone's fleeting alliance with Russia, so dangerous to European peace, will probably be solved by some sharp action, perhaps even by war undertaken against Turkey by one of these Powers or both together. In either case the incompatibility of their further aims will come to light. Only so long as the British and Russian community of interests in the East remains on a diplomatic footing, without undergoing the test of being put into action, can it work any lasting harm. Thus there might be no cause, perhaps, for Germany to hinder Anglo-Russian action, the surest means of dissolving the dangerous alliance, if there were no fear that Austria's nervous policy, which is so easily excited by events near at hand, but serious only in appearance, might lead her into premature action. . . .

But it has seemed lately as though the peace-disturbing connection between England and Russia will dissolve of itself as the British politicians, although they are less acute than the Russians, are beginning to recognise that by hastening the collapse of Turkey they are merely levelling the road for Russia without benefiting England.

Thus broadly speaking, our task in dealing with the East as a whole is to keep the peace between all parties wherever possible, and especially to prevent a conflict between Russia and Austria, and, as far as we can, to avoid any chance of war-like action by England and Russia against Turkey.

[A further extract is interesting in view of events which led up to the War of 1914.]

Panslavism with its revolutionary aims is a danger to both the Germanic Powers, to Austria even more than to us, and in the greatest measure of all, to the Empire and Dynasty of Russia. The Slav world in revolution, whether or not it is led by the Russian Emperor, will always be allied with the republican elements, not only in France, but in Italy, Spain and perhaps even in England. There the beginnings of it are evident, as shown by the Gladstonian doctrines. . . .

## CHAPTER XI

### THE EGYPTIAN QUESTION

[The necessity to England of a free passage to India through the Suez Canal was especially urgent in 1876, when the Eastern Crisis was at its height. An allusion to this occurs in a despatch dated January 4th, 1876 (see p. 22). In October of the same year and again in November (pp. 33-4, 42) Prince Bismarck urged the British Government to seek a peaceful solution of the Eastern Question by taking possession of Egypt and letting Russia have a free hand in Constantinople. Neither Lord Derby nor Lord Salisbury would consent to this way out of the difficulty.

In April, 1877, Nubar Pacha, then in exile, but destined soon to return to the control of affairs in Egypt, expressed a preference for British control, if control there must be (p. 52), and Prince Bismarck brought forward his suggestion once again, but with the same ill-success (p. 54).

In the discussions preceding the Congress of Berlin, M. Waddington insisted that Egypt and the Levant should be excluded from the competence of the Congress (p. 81).

In January, 1879, the hopeless state of the Egyptian finances caused a European Commission of Control to be set up in Cairo, which was quickly converted into a Condominium of the two Powers most interested in Egypt financially. This lasted up till 1882 (pp. 130-3), when the refusal of France to join England in coercing Alexandria left England alone in control of that country.

This caused Bismarck to join hands with the Ferry Government in France, whose jealousy of England's position in Egypt was unbounded. He saw that England's difficulties in Egypt would make her ready to pay a high price for German support against interference by other countries. Public opinion in Germany was demanding expansion for German trade in the form of colonies. In 1884 the question of freedom of trade in West Africa was opened, and France demanded the same privileges in Egypt. The French jealousy of England was openly expressed (pp. 415, 431) throughout 1884. The Suez Canal Commission, which sat in London in the Summer of 1884, was broken up by Count Münster in June on the Question of Sanitation (p. 135), and France and Germany promised each other mutual support against England in West Africa and Egypt (p. 136).

The decline and fall of Ferry's Government in March, 1885, caused Bismarck to modify his Egyptian policy (pp. 142, 143). He in fact stated that Germany's interests in Egypt were but small and suggested that England should offer some small compensation to France for what she had lost in Egypt. Later on Prince Bismarck's interest in Egypt revived, as the Colonial Question assumed larger proportions in Germany. Cf. Algenon Cecil's *British Foreign Secretaries*, p. 263.]

*German Note.*

The intervention by England and France in Egyptian affairs had since the Seventies turned de facto into an Anglo-French Condominium and



had led to a National movement in Egypt, which had repeatedly, and again in September, 1881, given rise to disturbances. Since the late Autumn of that year England and France had been discussing combined intervention in Egypt. They could, however, only agree in a negative sense on resistance to any interference by the Sultan of Turkey. It was not till January 10th, 1881, that they succeeded in addressing a Collective Note to the Egyptian Government.

## IV. 26

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *January 7th,*  
1882

I quoted you to Lord Granville as having said that he must know best the policy and attitude most suitable for England in Egypt. He was very glad to hear this and your remark that the status quo in Egypt, as long as it could be maintained, would be the most acceptable for all Europe. He began at once to speak of to-day's *Times* article, which forms the subject of Münster's despatch of to-day, and said: 'According to the Reports of our Consul-General in Cairo the Khedive sees very black and is quite discouraged. In order to stiffen his back and to express our wish to see present conditions maintained, we and the French have instructed our Representatives in Egypt, authorising them to use the same language. That much of M. Blowitz's article is true. But it is positively untrue that Gambetta made us earlier proposals and overtures for common action. Up till now France has behaved thoroughly loyally towards us in the Egyptian affair, and since I have no grounds for assuming that this will be altered, I think it the more important to maintain the status quo.'

I then mentioned to Granville your views on the various eventualities, which might arise from any fresh unrest in Egypt, and he said that personally he quite agreed with you that in such a case the restoration of order by the Turks would still be the least of the evils. But he could not say this officially—only as his private opinion—for he did not know his colleagues' views or whether they would agree with the reasons advanced by you. Action by England alone was out of the question, and Anglo-French action very risky. Turkish intervention was only objectionable in that the country which was now looking up, would suffer a relapse in administration and finances, and it would be difficult after a violent upheaval to get the Turkish troops out of Egypt again.

The main advantage of this solution was that the Concert of Europe would not be disturbed by it, whereas any other might produce misunderstandings between the European Powers. From Granville's uncertain utterances I gather that the prospect of

convincing the British Cabinet is not a great one. Meanwhile it comforts itself with the hope that there will be no unrest.

Lord Granville said: 'Several decisions of the Treaty of Berlin are still not carried out, and we have undertaken the administrative reform of Armenia. This province is in a miserable condition owing to Turkish misrule, and we believe that the collapse of the Turkish Empire which anyhow cannot last very long, will come suddenly and soon, if the provinces are not better organised and administered. We should like to postpone this event as long as possible, as it would be followed by incalculable disturbances, and we consider we shall be acting in the Sultan's interests and strengthening Turkey's ability to live, if we make her set her house in order there and to establish just and orderly administration. Our demands for Armenia are in fact very small. We certainly desire autonomy in no form, but have only demanded the sending of a High Commissioner, to examine conditions there and abolish any crying abuses. We have not even stipulated that he shall be a Christian, and have named no individual. Three months ago the Sultan promised to send this Mission, but has continually postponed it, and now that the Special Mission from Berlin to Constantinople has returned, he seems no longer willing to keep his promise. He sent word to Lord Dufferin (British Ambassador in Constantinople since March, 1881) that the weather was now too bad for travelling, and the High Commissioner must wait for better weather before starting for Armenia. Thus nothing has been done, and we fear that the Russians may exploit the dissatisfaction rife amongst the Christians in Armenia for their own purposes.'

To this I remarked that the Sultan had frequently failed to keep his promises made here, and therefore this need not be held to mean any special insult to England. It did not matter whether the 'Reforms' were worth much in themselves, but rather what meaning the Sultan, in his subjective way of thinking, attached to these words. There was, however, no doubt that the Sultan had an unconquerable fear of the word 'Reform'. Probably his entourage would fortify this fear in him and remind him that the last war had been preceded by a demand for local Reforms, which then had not been so very meaningless. The Sultan would fear that after Armenia will come the rest of Asia Minor, and Macedonia and Albania in addition, and thus his absolute power over his vassals and his prestige with them will suffer more and more.

I could not discover whether Granville agreed with this. He began again: 'It would have been difficult to settle the questions of Greece and Montenegro, if the Chancellor had declined to take them in hand.<sup>1</sup> Although your father may claim that Germany

<sup>1</sup> Cf. despatches of June 27th, 1880, et seq.

is not directly interested in Eastern affairs, there is no doubt that Germany now enjoys the greatest influence and prestige on the Bosphorus. If she would combine with England in exerting only a very slight pressure on the Sultan, he would certainly make up his mind to despatch the High Commissioner.'

I replied: 'It is my father's belief that it is now not England's interest to exert pressure on the Sultan regarding domestic affairs in Turkey as it would estrange him from England and weaken Turkey. But if the Sultan is deposed or murdered by his fanatical entourage "on account of his excessive compliance towards the Christian Powers", the Turkish collapse which England wishes to stave off may follow even sooner than the pessimists now believe. England, however, must wish to see the Turkish State kept in innocuous possession of the Straits. As for the Armenian Question, my father has not discussed it with me.'

Granville was somewhat impressed by these observations, and said: 'But we cannot now perform a volte face and suddenly oppose Reform, having engaged ourselves in its favour. It would mean adopting an opposite policy to the one we have followed up to the present.' . . .

Granville seemed much alarmed when I said to him that if England wished to set a European Arcopagus over Egypt, you believe this would be very hard to attain; and he smiled with relief when I added that you thought it would suit British policy better not to do it. He replied: 'If all the Powers take a hand in Egypt, their various interests will come to light and cause divisions in the Concert of Europe. We might easily find ourselves in opposition to France. Greece also would demand a part, since many Greeks live in Egypt, and combined European treatment of the Egyptian Question would only complicate it.'

#### IV. 30

COUNT HATZFELDT, BERLIN, TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA, *January 15th, 1882*

The latest combined action by the two Western Powers has strengthened the Imperial Chancellor's opinion that England is at present being governed with a lack of foresight, such as has hardly been equalled in the long history of that country, that she is tied absolutely to French leading-strings and thinks only of the friendship of France.

These events will not affect German policy in the first instance, but for the general European situation it is regrettable that England is seen slipping from one adventure into another.

If England, in isolation with France, intervenes in Egypt,

the position with regard to the other Powers having interest in the East is bound to be strained, and in fact there must before long be increased tension between England and France, for the union of these two Powers will not, in the Chancellor's opinion, stand in face of the very special interests, that England possesses, if the final settlement comes on for consideration in Egypt itself. Now, this conflict would find England isolated as the result of her unstable policy.

The weakness of Lord Granville, who instead of resisting Gladstone's encroachments into the sphere of Foreign Politics, and so preserving his own official responsibility, is merely struggling to shift the responsibility for the consequent errors on to Gladstone's shoulders—the entire lack of political understanding, which is proved once again by Gladstone's action in Egypt—all this unites in showing that England can no longer be relied on politically.

Prince Bismarck deplores that the former important and constant factor of England in Europe has fallen away, and sees in it a still greater obligation on the three Imperial Powers to show determination to deal with all questions in common, as they arise.

#### IV. 31

THE CROWN PRINCE FREDERICK TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*September 4th, 1882*

*Very confidential.*

My brother-in-law the Prince of Wales, shares the now general opinion that all political circles, without distinction of Party, desire closer and more confidential relations with Germany.

The conviction has been steadily growing that a close bond with Germany, not only is in the interests of England, but is more calculated than any other combination, to ensure European peace.

From information received by me I have the impression that in England an alliance with Germany and Austria would be welcomed with the object of giving it very far-reaching extension for co-operation against *every* danger that may threaten peace.

I consider myself bound to pass this information on to you, as it came to me. Your own judgment and the exact and reliable reports, on which it is based, will naturally be decisive for you. Nevertheless, I considered that I ought not to withhold from you the foregoing remarks, if only as a help towards realising the situation.

[Early in September, 1882, the Prince of Wales wrote to the Crown Prince of Germany, arguing in favour of a better understanding between

their two countries. This letter the Crown Prince passed on to Bismarck, who answered on September 7th in a letter, which is translated in the *Life of Lord Granville* (II, 274). Prince Bismarck emphasised two points: (1) that in her treatment of the Egyptian Question Germany was mainly concerned in maintaining peace in Europe, and (2) that British Foreign policy was always at the mercy of whatever Government happened to be in power, to the detriment of its continuity.]

[England was now left alone to deal with Egypt, as the French had decided to withdraw entirely from Egyptian affairs. The bombardment of Alexandria, followed by Lord Wolseley's Expedition, July, 1882, was the first action taken in Egypt by Great Britain in connection with no other Power. (Cf. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, III, p. 78 seq.)]

#### IV. 34

DR. MORITZ BUSCH TO THE CROWN PRINCE FREDERICK  
WILLIAM, September 7th, 1882

In obedience to the Chancellor I humbly beg to present the following statement of the general policy of Germany in the Egyptian Question, especially towards England.

Since the beginning of the Egyptian troubles the Imperial Government has held fast to the view that, in consideration of Germany's small direct interest in Egyptian affairs, the privileged position of England and France in that country, founded as it is on history, should be recognised and respected. When, therefore, after Gambetta's retirement, the two Western Powers seemed to be aiming at regulating the affairs of Egypt in agreement with the other European Powers, Germany supported in principle all those measures which the Cabinets of London and Paris chose to communicate to us. This was the case with a number of proposals which preceded the Conference scheme. Germany accepted the invitation of the two Powers to the Conference at Constantinople willingly, even though she had no faith in its success. The Conference could only be successful if the Western Powers prepared beforehand a definite scheme, especially one which the Sultan could accept, to lay before the other Powers. The scheme preferred by France was condemned to failure from the first, because she opposed any idea of military intervention by Turkey for fear that Islam might gain strength in Africa, and also because the rest of the Powers would shrink from granting a Mandate to the Western Powers, whilst ignoring the sovereign rights of the Sultan. The despatch of the British and French fleets into Egyptian waters, without Turkey's co-operation and without troops attached to them, led to the massacre at Alexandria, and the war-preparations of the National Party in Egypt made energetic land-operations necessary, in which France chose not to take part. Then our attitude in face of this situation

was determined by the idea of avoiding anything which might increase the difficulties of the British.

In particular, we prevented an attempt by Russia to combine the four Eastern Powers in a joint protest against England's isolated action in Egypt. . . .

When England occupied the Suez Canal (in the second half of August, 1882), thus greatly perturbing public opinion in every country, the reserved attitude of Germany insured that the British Government suffered no embarrassment due to this action. Germany's interest in the Suez Canal was not political, but purely commercial, and the German Government had no occasion for anxiety concerning the future of the Canal, as its existence and the free use of it was, both politically and commercially, a matter of vital interest for England. Here also, therefore, we refused to support the efforts made in certain quarters, to drive the British Government with its back to the wall by diplomatic demands for an explanation of its intentions. . . .

[In September, 1882, Count Herbert Bismarck was sent by his father to England in order to ascertain the final arrangements as regarded Egypt. (Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II, p. 274-.)]

#### IV. 38

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
September 13th, 1882

*Private letter.*

I returned yesterday from Walmer Castle (Lord Granville's) having spent there 1½ very pleasant days. On the first evening I was able to talk to Lord Granville about Egypt, and he was delighted at hearing that England would experience no objections or difficulties, raised by us, in her reorganisation of the affairs of Egypt. He said that he had no thought of annexation, but that he was not yet clear how the future of Egypt was to be settled. In any case, when various possibilities had been discussed in Cabinet, that one involving annexation had been definitely ruled out. Nevertheless he appeared to be gratified, when I said that even annexation would be compatible with our interests, for he kept on saying to himself that Germany would accept even the incorporation of Egypt. I then gave him your reasons for supposing that annexation would not suit British interests, and he admitted their correctness. He described the aim of British policy as being the establishment of British preponderance while maintaining the Khedive. For this purpose we shall need the Sultan and I consider the Chancellor's advice to establish ourselves there under Turkish authority to be very good. I constantly pressed on these grounds for the

conclusion of the Military Convention, and for some time past my position in the Cabinet has been difficult on that account; for nearly all my colleagues refused either to consider the Convention at all, or to let the Turks into Egypt.

'I took care, however, that the refusal of a military Convention should not compromise our relations with Turkey and so lead to a break, which I wished to avoid at all costs. Thus I managed that it should be discussed further, and I am sure that it will be set up before long. . . .'

This morning I was with Dilke (Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office) and spoke to him in the same sense. He was as always very pleasant, and certainly much flattered when I said that you wished to hear his views on the matter. It is much easier to talk to Dilke than to Granville, for he is less nervous, and also more clear-headed and frank.

Dilke's words agreed with Granville's about the feeling of friendship for Germany, which is making headway in English public opinion. He said: 'There has never been antipathy in England against Germany. The only nation that inspires antipathy and indeed bitter feelings is Russia. This formerly reacted indirectly on Germany, when it was felt that Germany was closely allied with Russia and intended to stand by her.' . . .

Turning to France, he said: 'They behave like children. (English in text.) They have no idea of politics and grope in the dark. . . . I am very much anti-French, for we have so many diverging interests. The French are at present very troublesome to us in Madagascar, but we cannot yet declare war on them on that account. They are trying to squeeze us in other parts as well, e.g., on the Niger and Congo they have made treaties with native chiefs (BISMARCK: '*You might let them have a corner.*') allowing Frenchmen a monopoly of trading rights. Also in the Pacific they have done much to hamper and irritate us. I hope that Gambetta will not return to power, for I fear that he will continue in great measure the niggling policy of pinpricks against us. Gambetta is no Chauvinist himself, but he makes use of it, as it gives him his pedestal. If he comes back, he will have to do something for Chauvinism, in order to maintain himself, and since Germany is too strong for him, he will rub up against us.'

Finally Dilke remarked that after the campaign was finished (Lord Wolseley's) the troops could not be withdrawn from Egypt all at the same time. The Khedive, especially, must have an ample and trustworthy bodyguard, and further, a Corps of observation must be left to contend with the Sudan and another on the Nile Delta, to hold the Bedouins in check and to cover the Suez Canal.

## IV. 41-2

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, LONDON,  
*October 22nd, 1882*

Lord Granville has just been with me to tell me that the English Cabinet has at last come to some decisions regarding Egypt. 'Our Ambassador, Lord Lyons,' said he, 'who is on leave in London, will go to Paris to-morrow to inform M. Duclerc that we have resolved to abolish the Control.<sup>1</sup> We assume that France will accept this, and Lord Lyons is further instructed to propose in Paris that the nomination of *one* Finance Controller should be left to the Khedive. If M. Duclerc agrees to this, Lord Lyons will make no further proposals, and I should prefer that the Khedive's choice should, as things stand at present, fall upon an Englishman. But should the French make difficulties and demand consideration for their nationality, Lord Lyons is authorised to make certain small concessions of no material value, but designed to flatter French vanity.

'Our sole concern in the nomination of the one Finance Controller is that he should concern himself only with finance, and not at all with politics. (The formula runs thus: "That the Khedive shall nominate an official, whose advice he is bound to take in all financial matters.") We only feel ourselves under obligation to see that peace and order are restored in Egypt and believe that the quickest and surest method of arriving at this will be an organised financial administration, for which we should be responsible.'

I remarked that I had believed that the British Government intended to give to its own diplomatic Representative in Egypt a position similar to that occupied by the French Resident Minister in Tunis, with the object of making them independent of political intrigues. 'No,' said Lord Granville, 'we shall not go as far as that. The whole question was only mentioned incidentally at one Cabinet meeting, and nothing has yet been put in writing concerning our decisions in the meantime, so that I cannot yet discuss it with your Ambassador. But I think it very important to keep the Chancellor informed of our intentions, and so I am telling you in strict confidence that we cannot use the same methods in dealing with the Suez Canal and Egypt. We wish to suggest that free passage through the Suez Canal in time of peace and war be secured to all seafaring nations under an international guarantee of the Powers, and that Egypt be recognised by the European Powers as a neutral State "à la guise de la Belgique". We believe that thus we shall disarm the greed and jealousy of other nations and also be relieved of the burden of keeping troops

<sup>1</sup> English in text.



in Egypt. This would cost us too much, as we should have to provide first-rate fortresses. Egypt, if a neutral State, would only require a very small Army, which would not be costly to her. Naturally a trustworthy corps of troops, on which the Khedive can rely, must first be organised, and the certainty provided that Egypt will not return to a state of anarchy. Until this point is reached, we cannot withdraw our troops, however much we may wish to. The European Powers themselves would expect and require our remaining in Egypt. Do you not think that the Chancellor also desires it ?'

To this direct question I merely replied : ' I know that the Chancellor will leave you a free hand in Egypt, and that he used to say that the English Ministers understood all questions touching the East immeasurably better than he did.'

Lord Granville smiled shyly and continued : ' We do not wish British officers in active service to enter the Egyptian Gendarmerie, which is to be formed, and shall not permit it. But we are quite prepared to allow officers of the Reserve and on half-pay to take service in it.

' Our other proposals,' he continued, ' I intend to communicate in a circular note to the Powers.' On my remarking that the differential treatment of the Suez Canal and Egypt might not meet with universal agreement, Lord Granville replied at once : ' Yes ; but we can never agree to the Suez Canal being neutralised. No British Minister can agree to this sea passage being closed to us in the event of war. But if Egypt is not declared neutral, we shall have to undertake all alone the protection of that country along with the enormous expense of it.

' The main difficulty, as I see it, consists in the position of the Sultan. In England and amongst my colleagues there is strong tendency to sever entirely the connection between the Sultan and Egypt. I will not go thus far. I wish to acknowledge the Sultan's sovereignty over a neutralised Egypt, and to see the payments of tribute continued. We wish to propose to the European Powers that all the Firmans of the Sultan concerning Egypt be elevated to the status of International Law, so that the Sultan can neither reverse nor alter them without the consent of all the Powers.

' Further than this we wish to propose that the Sultan shall be denied the right of issuing fresh Firmans without the leave of the combined Powers. This solution will probably not be pleasing to the Sultan. But we shall inform him that "there is a strong pressure to abolish the shadow-sovereignty",<sup>1</sup> and that it will be no light concession on our part, if we allow him to possess it. It would naturally be of value to me to learn the Chancellor's views on our scheme.'

<sup>1</sup> English in text.

I replied with the same phrase that had satisfied Lord Granville's first question and reminded him of my words spoken at Walmer on September 11th, that in the Chancellor's opinion British interests would be best served by settling the Egyptian matter under Turkish authority. Whereas, if England continued her present course, she could easily make her influence predominant in Egypt, but would estrange and weaken the Sultan. If England had followed her old traditional policy by renewing her Alliance with the Sultan, she would have attained her proper influence, not only in Egypt, but also in Constantinople, and have reaped a richer harvest.

So long as England felt the importance of keeping the Sultan in possession of the Straits and of preventing his becoming the vassal of some other European Power, her position in the Mediterranean would surely be made easier, if she would consent to act to some extent as the friendly vassal of Turkey and to rule in Egypt through Constantinople. The closer the bond was drawn between Turkey and Egypt, and the more Egypt was placed in the position of a Pachalik, so much the more would England be insured against the intrigues of other Powers in Egypt. Were Egypt, however, made a kind of African Belgium, it could be foreseen that it could easily become the victim of such intrigues.

Lord Granville shook his head thoughtfully over this suggestion and said after a short silence: 'I must confess that this smiles to me much more than any other solution,<sup>1</sup> but I could not possibly persuade my colleagues to assent to it. The Sultan is very unpopular here, and by his own fault. He would rather show greater hostility to us, if he could. It would have been less annoying than his insincere and dilatory policy. It is all the more foolish of the Sultan, for I suppose you gave him very judicious advice<sup>1</sup> more than once in the summer, which he did not follow. I could not now force through any policy giving the Sultan even an apparent advantage.'

Lord Granville then expressed satisfaction at the success, which England had enjoyed in the whole affair and at Lord Dufferin's skilful management. 'In July the game was against us; now we have as good as four honours in one hand.' These were his Lordship's last words. (BISMARCK: '*The four honours are ours! We lend them gladly.*') ~

#### IV. 45

STUMM, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON, TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, October 31st, 1882

Telegram.

Lord Granville requests me to inform you that neutralisation

<sup>1</sup> English in text.

of Egypt is given up, but that a proposal for an international agreement will shortly be embodied in a circular note addressed to the Powers, to assure free passage through the Canal for the ships of all nations at any time. Letter on my conversation with Lord Granville forwarded to you yesterday evening via Berlin.

*German Note.*

In answer to this telegram, reporting the above proposal, Count Herbert Bismarck on *October 31st*, 1882, replied: 'The Chancellor considers that Germany has no interest in preventing free passage through Suez Canal to any nation. England's representing this principle in the present situation proves to him, beyond his expectation, the unselfishness of British policy.'

*German Note.*

A letter from Baron Stumm, Counsellor of Embassy in London, informed Count Herbert Bismarck (October 30th, 1882) of the British efforts to gain the assent of the French to the formal removal of the combined control of the Egyptian Finances and to affirm the British domination in Egypt with their agreement.

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO BARON STUMM,  
*November 2nd*, 1882

I have shown my father your letter of October 30th. He repeated the remark, which I telegraphed on October 31st, that we have no objection whatever to offer to the free navigation of the Suez Canal. But we could not give any *guarantee* of this principle. According to the British interpretation of the guarantee treaty of the neutrality of Luxemburg (that it was only a collective engagement and not one binding the individual Contracting Parties by a European guarantee Treaty) the real significance of an international guarantee could scarcely be attached to it, and it would be of little use to England. For us, however, it is essential that we should regard conscientiously any obligation which we have undertaken under a treaty, and we are accustomed to remain faithful to it. In the present case we simply could not do so, because we have not the forces to insist on free navigation through the Canal, supposing that one of the stronger Sea-Powers—and they alone have to be considered—put hindrances in the way. This reason, quite apart from the question of interests, would be quite sufficient to prevent our promising anything outside our power of action. Your letter mentions nothing of 'Guarantees', only 'international Agreement'. If Granville by that meant 'Guarantee', as I think he probably did, you might speak to him in the foregoing sense in your next conversation with him.

Lord Granville knows that we shall not oppose his new conception regarding Egyptian affairs. In this sense we are ready

to accept the principle of free navigation—but we cannot guarantee it.

For England the most convenient solution would be for the Khedive to proclaim the removal of the joint control, and my father is astonished that Lord Granville rejected his suggestion to this effect. He is wise in considering a return to it.

## IV. 46-7

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO BARON STUMM, CHARGÉ  
D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON, *November 4th, 1882*

I have received your letter with its enclosures, and have read to my father the most important parts of Granville's Memorandum. First among these I count the statement that only a temporary character is to be attached to all the new arrangements proposed for Egypt by England. On them Prince Bismarck remarked that he thought a provisional arrangement of this kind to be unpractical, considering the impossibility of calculating the day of fulfilment of the promise. . . . But he could naturally not oppose it, if England insisted on this provision and was in agreement with the other Powers.

[The question of annexation or withdrawal from Egypt is discussed in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, III, p. 118 seq.]

[On *January 3rd, 1883*, a Circular Despatch was sent to the Powers, declaring that England regarded her stewardship of Egypt as temporary in character. There was also an assurance that the Suez Canal was to be free to all nations.]

## IV. 47

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, BICESTER, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*January 14th, 1883*

*Extract.*

Lord Granville was very much pleased at your message to him. He begged me to transmit to you his thanks for the friendly attitude shown by Germany to England throughout the whole Egyptian crisis. . . .

He said: 'I must say that for my part I desire close relations between the Western Powers for many reasons. England does not need an alliance with a European Power and we do not pursue a policy of alliances. Even quite different circumstances than the present ones would never lead me to establish an alliance with a Western Power. My policy indeed has always aimed at standing well with France. Paris does not make this easy for me now. During all the late negotiations the French Cabinet has not made one definite proposal to us.'

I am to lunch with Sir William Harcourt (Home Secretary) to-morrow. I met him lately. He is one of the most influential

amongst the more moderate members of the Cabinet, occupying a middle position between the Radicals and Whigs. He is very pleased to be a Minister and is delighted at the new popularity that has accrued from the Egyptian business to Gladstone's Cabinet, which was showing a certain amount of wear and tear in the spring. He said to me : ' We are uncommonly grateful to Prince Bismarck, for the friendly attitude of German policy this summer was of great service to us. Our being left with a free hand in Egypt we owe, when all is said, to Germany's goodwill. We are all aware that at a particular moment Prince Bismarck could have upset the coach if he had chosen to, and we realise with much thankfulness that he refrained from doing so.'

*Comment by The Emperor WILLIAM I: 'We did not withdraw our ships out of goodwill, but in order to avoid becoming involved in any hostile action, and in order to leave England alone to bear the consequences of her faulty policy.'* ✓

## CHAPTER XII

### THE GERMAN COLONIAL QUESTION

[The price of assistance rendered by Germany to England was still to be paid, and Bismarck was determined that payment should take the form of British acquiescence in German colonial expansion. (Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II, 359.) Early in 1884 Prince Bismarck had received a report on the Land Question in the Fiji Islands and on it had based a claim in favour of German subjects who possessed interests there. In a despatch, dated April 4th, 1884, he returned to the charge.]

IV. 48-9

COUNT HATZFELDT, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO  
COUNT MÜNSTER, *April 4th, 1884*

In regard to your Report of January 11th on the Land question in Fiji, I am directed by the Chancellor to request you to hand the enclosed note in draft form to Lord Granville. You should also discuss the whole affair with him orally and confidentially and lay stress on the following points:

The British Government will recognise that we are very forthcoming in all great political questions, and have avoided all semblance of criticism of England's exceptional position in the East and everything which might perhaps embarrass the Government, as regards existing Treaties. This includes particularly the attack on Alexandria and all that has happened since in Egypt. . . . But we cannot leave the just claims of German Nationals unprotected out of mere goodwill for England. Unfriendly and, as we see it, unjust treatment of German subjects must necessarily react unfavourably on our political relationship towards England.

I beg you to report on the execution of the foregoing instructions and the success of your overtures, as soon as possible, and I add that I have spoken in this sense to Lord Ampthill, when he lately came to see me and expressed the thanks of his Government for our friendly attitude in the Egyptian question. Having pointed out in a friendly manner that hitherto England had been the accepting party, that Lord Granville's replies on the question of Fiji had only contained refusals, I indicated that, if the British Government persisted in ignoring the well-established interests

of German subjects in the Fiji Islands, and refused an impartial examination of the same, Germany might have occasion to conduct an examination into British action in other regions of policy.

[The conciliatory attitude now shown by Lord Granville induced Bismarck to press for freedom of trade for all nations in all British possessions in Africa and the South Seas. In his despatch, dated May 5th, 1884, however, the Prince concentrated on showing cause why Heligoland should be given over to Germany.]

#### IV. 50-1

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, May 5th, 1884

*Confidential.*

I have received your letter of April 29th and am delighted to hear that Lord Granville recognises our friendly attitude. In accordance with the intentions of His Majesty the Emperor, we are ready to acquire further similar recognition if similar cordiality manifests itself on the British side.

An early opportunity for the latter might be afforded by giving attention to our grievances regarding the treatment of German nationals in the South Seas and by showing greater consideration for our trade interests in Africa. We hold the opinion that foreign trade in all territories, which are not universally recognised to be already annexed by one of the European Powers, must be equally free to all nations, and that further expansions by individual Powers, as for example that which is contemplated for Portugal by the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty, can only take place under the recognised condition that the extension and development of *existing* trade agreements is not interfered with. We could only recognise further annexations by other Powers if these conditions are secured by treaty. The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty does not conform to this principle, for it places under exclusively Portuguese administration large parts of the coast, which have hitherto been free.

A further test of England's intention to continue to maintain friendly relations with us depends on the question of Heligoland. This purely German island in the possession of England is nothing more nor less than a jumping-off point for attacks on the mouth of the Elbe and the West coast of Holstein. If it belonged to Germany, we should be prepared to face the expense of providing it with a harbour of safety, which the dangerous channels on each side of it make necessary for navigation. The lack of it has caused year by year considerable losses to the various merchant Navies (including the British) in property and human lives. We should understand it if England regretted the cession of the

Ionian Islands, for they affect British interests in Egypt and India, and their loss was paid for by no compensating advantage to England. But Heligoland is useless to England in peacetime, and in war-time its usefulness would be very problematical. An agreement or treaty, handing the island over to Germany, with the addition of some condition binding Germany to construct a harbour of safety there, would make a very favourable impression upon German public opinion, now not so friendly disposed towards England as formerly, and also facilitate for us our benevolent attitude towards British policy, of which Lord Granville has rightly expressed his appreciation. Our friendship can be of great help to British policy. It is not a matter of indifference to England whether she has the good wishes and support of the German Empire or whether it stands coldly aloof. The influence which our example exercised upon the other Continental Powers in the matter of the invitations to the recent Conference (on Egyptian affairs) is a case in point. It is likely that the effect would have been the opposite, supposing that Germany in the beginning had sought an understanding with other Powers on the Egyptian question. Owing to her geographical position, England is in no serious danger from any Power except from France in Europe, and in Asia from Russia.

France, however, should she adopt a menacing attitude towards England, would require at the very least the certainty of German neutrality, and Russia also must have an eye to the attitude of Germany, should she really wish to move against England, whether in India or Constantinople. We believe, therefore, that our attitude—I will not say towards England herself, with whom we should not think of quarrelling—but our attitude to her enemies or rivals is of more importance to British policy than the possession of Heligoland and all the trade rivalry of German and British firms in distant seas. England can secure for herself the continuance of our active support for her political interests through sacrifices, which she would hardly feel. We should certainly hold fast to our policy of the last twenty-two years, that of being the friends of our friends. If we were not that, we should still not be the enemies of England, but it would not be difficult for us to improve our relations with England's permanent opponents, who are so through the natural conflict of their interests, by offering them services by which we should certainly further our good relations to them.

In making these proposals, we seem, in my opinion, to be offering rather than demanding a sacrifice, for the support, which we can and eventually shall give to England, is worth in reality more than Heligoland, Fiji and Little Popo, put together. . . .



## IV. 53

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *May 8th*, 1884

*Very confidential.*

I have read Your Highness' despatch of the 5th inst. with great interest and am delighted to see that you wish to approach a question, which has always been a favourite idea of mine.

I entirely agree with Your Highness that all Germany would welcome the acquisition of Heligoland, particularly in the Hanse towns and on our North Sea coast. I think that I know their feeling on the matter.

The support that Your Highness offers our trade and fellow-countrymen in all parts of the world, and this important gain which you contemplate, will make it easier to bring public opinion to take a more correct view of overseas affairs than exists now in Germany. To this I add the very well meant, but, in my humble opinion, quite unpractical and crude yearning after colonisation, which has led to Societies being started.

Your Highness recognises perfectly the importance of being master of our own door.

Two things are essential: the possession of Heligoland, the natural advanced post of the German coasts and rivers, and the construction of a great ship-canal between the North Sea and Baltic.

Neither is beyond our strength and I hope that Your Highness, having done so much for the greatness and might of the German Fatherland, will call both these to life and live to see their completion.

Your Highness has long recognised the great importance of the *Ostsee* Canal, which would, protecting us against Danish and Scandinavian intrigues in the future, more than double the strength of our fleet, and, moreover, in a war with Russia, which God forbid, would possess great importance politically against England. The possession of Heligoland is certainly of this category as an advanced post in war and a harbour of refuge in peace.

During my appointment here I have always, although the possession of Heligoland lay near my heart, carefully avoided discussing the question with the statesmen here. The only conversation which I have had with an English statesman on the subject was one with the present Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby, who himself brought up the question. I was shooting with him at Knowsley, when he received his letters, which included one from the Governor of Heligoland. Lord Derby said to me: 'This perfectly useless piece of rock in the North Sea, the smallest of our colonies, gives me the most trouble of any. First of all, I

can find no Governor for it, and now he writes regularly, like his predecessor, and begs to be transferred elsewhere.' To which I answered: 'If the rock seems so useless to you, you should either make it useful by building a harbour or else hand it over to us Germans.' He replied: 'A harbour of refuge would be very important, if it could be made, but we have so much to do at Dover and elsewhere on our coasts, that it is out of the question. Germany would be more able and have more interest in doing it.' I said: 'Yes, but then Germany would have to own Heligoland, and there is no prospect of that; moreover I am not sure whether sufficient importance would be attached to it in Germany.' Lord Derby replied: 'If Germany would undertake to build a harbour of refuge in three years, which would cost at least £250,000, there might be some use in talking about it.'

I pretended to attach little importance to the matter; this conversation, however, gives me an easy opening for serious discussion of it at a convenient opportunity, and for this Lord Derby, as Colonial Secretary, carries much weight, particularly with Mr. Gladstone. I can quite easily sound Lord Granville, but I must first seek an early opportunity of bringing it orally to Mr. Gladstone's notice. Without knowing Mr. Gladstone's views, Lord Granville could not very well discuss the subject. He is dependent on him to a remarkable degree. . . .

I agree with Your Highness that the present moment is on the whole very favourable, and I shall seek an opportunity for going into the matter, as soon as I hear from you. I should, as Your Highness has already indicated, present the matter as one in which we should be doing a great service to England, since British maritime trade would receive greater benefits from such an arrangement than our own. (BISMARCK: '*and help England in the Egyptian Question.*') . . .

[Seventeen days later Prince Bismarck executed a sudden *volte face*. His attack on England at this moment was actuated by his anxiety to increase his personal popularity in his own country in view of the coming General Election.<sup>1</sup> A more urgent and equally convenient instrument to his purpose had suddenly presented itself, and his Ambassador in London received instructions to let the question of Heligoland drop for the moment.]

#### IV. 56

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, *May 25th, 1884*  
*Telegram.*

In view of the unexpectedly peremptory attitude of the English regarding Angra Pequena, I beg you to cease to mention the subject of Heligoland in your discussions. It would provide

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville's '*Life*', II, 358.

an excuse for making the justice of our African claims subservient to our rights regarding Heligoland.

[The Prince explained his reasons for the above in the following note to a report written by Count Hatzfeldt on May 24th, 1884.]

#### IV. 58

I pressed Count Münster strongly to-day to say no more about Heligoland, for a desire of this kind can only be presented to a nation when it is in a friendly mood towards us. This description does not apply to the English of to-day, as is proved by their unrestrained claims against us in colonial matters. A Monroe Doctrine for Africa! Our wishes regarding Heligoland rest on no legal basis and would drag down our justified demands regarding overseas affairs to the same level, if they were lumped together for public discussion. If we fail to obtain justice from England across the ocean, we must at any rate try to gain closer touch with the other sea-faring Powers, France included. Public opinion in Germany would not endure the arrogance and selfishness of the English for ever.

#### *German Note.*

The proceedings concerning *Angra Pequena*, which led to serious complications between Germany and England, are described in full in the German White Book, No. 61, 1884-85, and the British Blue Books, C. 4196, 4262 and 4263.<sup>1</sup> When, in the spring of 1883, Herr Lüderitz, of Bremen, started a factory at *Angra Pequena*, it was understood in England that there was no intention of planting the German flag on that coast. This was, however, done on May 1st. Whereupon the Government of Cape Colony took alarm for fear of further aggressions on the part of Germany. In November, 1883, the German Embassy in London was instructed to ascertain officially from the British Government, in respect of Lüderitz's factory, whether there was any intention on its part to claim the territory of *Angra Pequena*, and, if the reply was in the affirmative, to enquire on what title the claim was based. On November 21st the British Government returned an evasive answer, and the German enquiry was repeated with greater emphasis in a Note on December 31st. The Note argued from former official utterances by the British Government, that it neither possessed nor claimed any sovereign rights over the territory in question. In case, however, some such claim might prove to be valid, the German Government desired to ascertain the title on which this claim was founded, and what provision England possessed on the spot for the protection of German subjects in their commercial enterprises and lawful acquisitions; so that the German Empire might consider itself exempted from the duty of providing its subjects in that territory by direct means with the protection of which they might stand in need.

This official enquiry was left unanswered by the British Government for six months. But the Cape Government pressed the Home Government to take possession of the whole of the coast of south-west Africa as far as Walvisch Bay. Upon this, the German Government on April

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Lord Granville's 'Life,' II, 348.

24th, 1884, definitely took the settlements of Luderitz under its own protection. Still the British Government appeared determined to ignore this official communication. Finally, however, Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, announced on May 16th to a deputation of South African merchants, and on the 19th in the House of Lords, that, even if England was not prepared to take formal possession of Angra Pequena, she considered that she had the right to prevent other nations from doing so. Early in June the Cape Government declared its readiness to take over the whole stretch of coast as far as Walfisch Bay, including Angra Pequena; upon which Prince Bismarck informed Lord Granville (June 4th) that 'we are not disposed to recognise any such aggression and shall dispute England's right in the matter'.

[The emphasis laid by Prince Bismarck in his despatch of May 5th, also on May 8th, on the importance of Heligoland to Germany, had misled Count Münster into the belief that Bismarck meant to let the question of the Colonies drop.

This unfortunate expression of opinion was taken up sharply by Prince Bismarck (June 1st, 1884), who had, as we have seen, let Heligoland drop for the time being. Dr. Moritz Busch, in his 'Bismarck' (III, 120), relates that the Prince said: 'Münster must leave London'. Münster had also been led into the error of discussing Colonial affairs with Lord Derby, now Colonial Minister. The complications and delays introduced into the affair of Angra Pequena by the fact of the Cape being a 'self-governing' Colony were incomprehensible to a mind accustomed to autocracy in all dealings with other nations. Nevertheless, Prince Bismarck was correct in insisting that his Ambassador should negotiate only with the Foreign Secretary.]

#### IV. 59

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, *June 1st, 1884*

##### *Extract.*

Your reply of May 8th indicates this moment as favourable for carrying out the instructions, fears no hitch and advises that there should be no delay. This report deals only with Heligoland apart from an incidental reference to the German colonial aspirations which, in your view, are 'unpractical and untimely'. Consequently I supposed that you held the moment favourable only in the matter of Heligoland. For this reason I showed in my despatch of May 11th that the acquisition of Heligoland was of secondary importance, and that I preferred to ascertain whether England is inclined, in her present situation, in return for our firm offer of greater support than before for British policy, to satisfy our overseas grievances by ceasing to lay hindrances in the way of the legitimate enterprises of German nationals. . . .

If Lord Granville finds that the English Parliament's friendly feeling towards us is incompatible with our pursuit of a Colonial policy, we should be curious to learn why the right to colonise, which England uses to the fullest extent, should be denied to us. In the particular matter of Angra Pequena, Lord Derby asked Cape Town whether there was any likelihood that the Colony

would decide to annex that place. He thus treats it as though it were *res nullius*. You would have been all the more justified in expressing your astonishment, that the right of German subjects to trade there was not unconditionally admitted in the House of Lords speech, and much more so, that the Monroe Doctrine, that monstrosity in International Law, was being applied in favour of England to the coast of Africa. Supposing it to be really our intention to establish colonies, how can Lord Granville contest our right to do so at the very moment when the British Government is granting an unlimited exercise of the same right to the Government at the Cape? This naive egoism is in itself an insult to our national feeling, and you will please point this to Lord Granville. The '*quod licet Jovi*, etc.,' cannot be applied to Germany.

The game at hide and seek with the Colonial Office and the appeal on account of the Independence of British Colonies is merely an evasion, so long as these remain under the Queen's sceptre and under the protection of the Mother Country, when their policy brings them in contact with foreign Powers. It is the same as though, supposing the French complained about the conduct of the Reichsland Government, we were to refer to the independent status of the local administration and the territorial representatives.

If the British Colonial Governments interfere unjustifiably with German trade we have only the British Government to refer to. . . . And I beg you to enter into no dealings with Lord Derby on these subjects, and to let him know quietly, if he should open them, that you are able to discuss them with the Foreign Minister only.

I foresee that, when the Reichstag meets again, we shall be called upon to answer questions concerning our overseas policy and the attitude of England towards it, in particular. I shall have to be in a position to explain the attitude of England, as shown by your reports, without consideration for the impression that the various occurrences may make upon public opinion in Germany. This will make clear the true inwardness of the 'negotiations' which British statesmen perpetually describe as being in the balance. The real state of the case is that our appeals regarding the question of Fiji remained unanswered for months, and our enquiries concerning British claims in South Africa were not replied to at all. We have even received no communication following the receipt of my telegram to our Consul at the Cape and of your formal communication of it.

*German Note.*

The above refers to Bismarck's telegram to Consul Lippert at Cape Town (April 24th, 1884), instructing him to inform the Cape Government

officially that the German Empire was undertaking the protection of Lüderitz and his territorial acquisitions, and to the simultaneous instructions to the German Ambassador in London to inform the Foreign Office officially of this.<sup>1</sup>

Your Report gives me the impression that the British Ministers do not seriously think it possible that we shall make a change in our policy owing to their want of reciprocity. If your representations fail to remove this error, I do not doubt that the forthcoming public negotiations will make the matter clear. Nowadays no Government is strong enough to stand the reproach of having sacrificed its own national interests as a favour to a friendly foreign Power. The still youthful German Empire must especially avoid incurring such a suspicion.

## IV. 63

COUNT MÜNSTER TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 7th, 1884*

In completion of my telegraphic report of to-day's date regarding Angra Pequena, I submit to Your Highness that I have just had a further conversation with Lord Granville. The Minister was much worried and upset by the communication I made to him on Your Highness' behalf that we could not recognise an annexation of the kind which had been notified from Cape Town. He expressed himself somewhat as follows:

'I am taken aback by your Government's abrupt action. We had been requested to make a statement on the nature of the protection which we are in a position to give to German settlements on the West Coast of Africa, (BISMARCK: '*We know nothing of that up to the present.*') as well as on the extension and origin of our claims in those regions. To my sincere regret we have not yet been able to reply because we cannot act except in agreement with the Government of the Colony, which has an independent Ministry and Parliament. (BISMARCK: '*That is untrue, and does not concern us; if it were true, we should have to maintain a Legation with these British Colonial Governments.*') Our agreement with this Colonial Government has been delayed by their Ministerial crisis. (BISMARCK: '*We can't wait for that.*') The friendly German Government finds itself compelled to take action before this agreement and consequent settlement of conditions has been achieved. Neither my colleagues nor myself have the slightest intention of obstructing German Colonial aspirations, and I beg you to say so plainly to Prince Bismarck. I must, however, observe that I have not formed the impression from any of the communications which have passed between Count Bismarck and myself, or between the Chancellor and Lord Ampthill, that the German Government wish to pursue a Colonial

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II. 350.

policy. (BISMARCK: '*What is a Colonial policy? We must protect our countrymen.*') The fact that we at once sent a warship to protect the African possessions of the Bremen House, when an attack upon them was feared, proves that we are not hostile to the German settlements. (BISMARCK: '??? *When?*') Please say to Prince Bismarck that I hope he will not think that we are in opposition to one another in Angra Pequena, and that I earnestly beg him to take no further action there, until the two Cabinets have come to an understanding.' (BISMARCK: '*Since December of last year.*')

When I remarked that the development of Germany's English policy depended on the attitude of the British Government in these overseas questions, Lord Granville answered: 'I have known that for a long time. We had no wish but to meet you, and we have given you to understand as much. The only reproach which you can make against us is the slow progress of negotiations; this, however, happens owing to the independent position of our Colonies, which we cannot get over with the best will in the world.'

[Count Herbert Bismarck, who at the time was German Minister at the Hague, was sent to London in order to strengthen Count Münster's hand.]

#### IV. 64

##### COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *London, June 16th, 1884*

On my saying to Lord Granville the day before yesterday that I supposed that Lord Ampthill had already reported his long conversation with Your Highness, he said it was not so.<sup>1</sup> He spoke first in general terms about the still unfinished negotiations with France regarding Egypt, which should be completed in the next few days. I remarked to him that Germany's interests in Egypt amounted to over 100 millions of marks. Lord Granville answered: 'I always thought that you had no interest whatever in Egypt.' I replied that the amount of our material interests in Egypt had not hitherto been ascertained. . . .

In accordance with Your Highness' instructions I told Lord Granville that our countrymen's unhappy experiences in Fiji had made them distrustful of British protection. Under the circumstances we could not refuse them ours in territories hitherto unoccupied.

Lord Granville repeated the old excuses about Fiji, but admitted that perhaps England had everywhere given too much attention to the principles of humanity, (BISMARCK: '///') that the interests of the natives should be considered (BISMARCK: '//')

<sup>1</sup> Cf. German White Book, 'Angra Pequena, No. 24'.

in territories newly acquired or to be acquired. He promised to make a personal study of the question, which was rather strange to him, and expressed his confidence of being able to satisfy our justified claims.

Regarding Angra Pequena . . . Lord Granville said : ' I cannot well inform you exactly on this question, as it has more to do with my colleagues than myself. (BISMARCK : ' / ' ) I should like to ask you to discuss it with Lord Derby in my presence, and since he is new to the Colonial Office, I will include his predecessor, Lord Kimberley.' I replied to the noble Lord that I could not attend a Ministerial conference.

Lord Granville answered : ' If you will not do this, I naturally cannot insist on it. It is very hard for me, as I have so much to do, that I cannot well enter into these Colonial questions. (BISMARCK : ' *Foreign Office.*' ) Lord Derby himself says that the Foreign Office demands two hours a day more work than the Colonial Office. Besides this, a part of the Parliamentary business falls on me, as Leader of the Upper House, in this difficult time. On the top of this, I have to conduct the awkward Egyptian negotiations.'

I returned no answer to these complaints. The idea that he might shift the burden on to younger shoulders did not seem to occur to him.

The Minister remarked that it was painful to him that the British Government should bear the blame for the delay in replying. This he had said in the House of Lords. But he had hoped that we should not perform a *fait accompli* during the negotiations. I said I knew nothing about ' negotiations ' and did not understand what he meant by them. We had asked a simple question with ' yes ' or ' no ' for an answer. The encouragement of Cape Colony to annex the territory in question subsequently, and the delay in answering, had aroused the belief that the British Government meant to spring a *fait accompli* on us. I mentioned Your Highness' views and spoke of England's ingratitude and its possible effect on the London Conference (on the Finances of Egypt). Lord Granville was evidently impressed. . . .

I told him that we wished neither now nor later for Colonies in the English sense, but only immediate protection for our countrymen, who would receive a Charter ; whereupon he said : ' You will come to Colonies, all the same. Nearly the whole of ours began in this way, and you will be unable to avoid it. But if Germany pursues a Colonial policy and opens barbarian lands to civilisation and commerce, we should be quite satisfied and should rejoice at it. (BISMARCK : ' *Possibly ; but we do not wish to create them artificially. If they arise we shall do our best to protect them.*' ) It is quite otherwise with France, for wherever



they colonise, the French introduce high protective tariffs, as high as 50 per cent., and do us infinite harm.' . . .

It is not easy to keep Lord Granville to the point. He is suffering from a bad attack of gout and is much aged. His memory seems to be failing, and he appeared to have entirely forgotten some of our Ambassador's earlier overtures.

All my acquaintances of both parties, and also the press—for instance the *Pall Mall Gazette* of the day before yesterday—express a desire for his resignation.

[Finally, on June 22nd, 1884, Lord Granville informed Count Herbert that his Government had resolved 'not to question the protection claimed by Germany in that part of Africa'.]

#### IV. 75

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*July 9th, 1884*

Mr. Chamberlain indicated the obligation accepted by the French never to occupy Egypt, as the most important point in the Agreement under discussion. I pointed out that after the evacuation is completed, a new Arabi may arise and a new anarchy break out. He observed: 'That would not matter to us. We only went to Egypt in 1882 to keep the French out, and we should never have done it if we had felt secure on that point. We now want to achieve this security; so long as no other European Power can contemplate a military occupation of Egypt, we do not care whether conditions there are disturbed under any kind of Pachadom.

'If, however, we do not obtain this guarantee, and we come to no agreement, we cannot evacuate Egypt in the meantime. I cannot suppose that the French would declare war upon us for this reason; it would be absolutely grotesque if they attacked us, because we refused to collect "rents" for them.'<sup>1</sup>

I desired to encourage Mr. Chamberlain in this idea and said that in my opinion a Republican Government would not enter into a great war on such a frivolous pretext, and that the present French Constitution would not foster warlike adventures.

This was decidedly pleasant hearing to Mr. Chamberlain. His crest rose, so to speak. He settled himself in his chair and declared: 'You know we are not a warlike nation.'<sup>1</sup> But if in the long run the French become too uppish, we have no reason to shrink from war. We go a long way to meet France, but if she insists on making our position in Egypt impossible, we shall not hesitate to fight.'

I have allowed myself to dwell somewhat on Mr. Chamber-

<sup>1</sup> English in text.

lain's remarks, because I think they are characteristic of this most influential of British Ministers. So far as I can judge, they show a singular absence of political judgment and a surprising ignorance of European conditions and conceivable groupings of Powers. It appears to me particularly interesting that this typical representative of commercialism and Free Trade should discuss with a foreigner the possibility of a war with France from a purely cosmopolitan standpoint.

It proves again that the younger English Radicals are less Gallophil and politically more susceptible to influence than the old school now represented in the Cabinet by Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville.

Mr. Chamberlain asked me finally about Your Highness' present attitude towards England and, in connection with recent conversations on overseas questions, he expressed himself most unfavourably (*abfällig*) about the conduct of the Foreign Office. He remarked: 'Prince Bismarck has done us such great service, that I only wished he might have been convinced that there is no Power we should have been so pleased to gratify as Germany. We should have been in great difficulties but for Germany's friendly attitude, and I deeply deplore it if our clumsiness has caused you a momentary irritation. I hope that we may now consider that a thing of the past.'

As regards Egypt, I have only to add that the Russian Ambassador said to me the day before yesterday, after some highly complimentary remarks upon German policy and the Russo-German Agreement, 'Prince Bismarck can now again play a great political rôle.' I asked, 'How?' He continued: 'It lies now with him to determine the fate of Egypt and all that depends on it, according to whether he decides for England or for France.'

I replied that Your Highness would hardly do that, for our policy was rather one of reserve, and that so far as I understood it, it was to give free play to French and English statecraft for the solution of the difficulties still outstanding.

[Prince Bismarck's resentment against the British Government was by no means assuaged by these concessions.]

*German Note.*

The wording of the telegram, in which Count Münster announced them, caused him—wrongly—to assume that the British Government was standing out on a condition prohibiting the Germans from establishing Penal Settlements at Angra Pequena. Prince Bismarck had refused to consider the condition, and it was abandoned. He was even more exasperated at the decision of the Cape Parliament, at the instigation of the British Colonial Administration, to annex the strip of coast to the North and South of Angra Pequena. Germany anticipated the execution of this decision by hoisting the German Flag at Angra Pequena on August 7th, 1884, and the whole coast-line between 26° S. and the Portuguese

boundary was declared to be German territory.<sup>1</sup> It was not long before similar action was taken in the Cameroons, Little Popo and certain other places. One result of the Anglo-German disagreement on colonial subjects was the less cordial attitude of Germany at the Conference on Egyptian Affairs, which was held in London and was dissolved without attaining any result, on August 2nd, 1884, at the instance of England.

[It was the Conference at which Count Münster raised the question of the Sanitation of the Suez Canal and caused the abrupt and stormy conclusion of it.]

[Throughout 1884 Bismarck supplemented his control of public opinion in Germany by a Press Campaign against England. Dr. Moritz Busch, one of the Prince's chief Press agents, in his *Memoirs of Bismarck*, wrote the following :

'On the 16th of November Bucher again sent me material for an attack upon England. This I worked up into an article entitled "England and the Cholera", which was published in No. 49 of the *Grenzboten*, III, p. 123.]

[In Bismarck's opinion, Count Münster, the German representative at the London Conference, failed to mark sufficiently the change of attitude in England's disfavour.]

#### IV. 77

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, *August 12th, 1884*

Your Excellency's telegram of August 7th has strengthened my opinion that London is not so far showing the consideration to our overseas trade, to which it is entitled. If we fail to push our rights with energy, we shall risk, by letting them sink into oblivion, falling into a position inferior to England's, and strengthening the unbounded arrogance shown by England and her Colonies in opposition to us. We may be driven to contemplate a complete rupture, if you do not succeed in making the British Government realise more clearly than hitherto this danger. Seeing the want of consideration shown in British Colonial policy, modesty on our part is out of place and is not the way to maintain good relations with England.

In the Conference negotiations I could have wished that our views regarding our participation in the *Caisse de la Dette* had been expressed more clearly, and not bound up with the question of Russian participation, as happened at the session on July 29. . . .

I fear that Your Excellency did not make it sufficiently clear to the British statesmen that our lack of cordiality at the Conference was directly due to their treatment of our Colonial interests, and that a continuance of it would necessarily strengthen a rapprochement between ourselves and France. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, 354, and the correspondence given in the German White Book, 'Angra Pequena', Nos. 36 and 40-49.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 135.

## IV. 78-9

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT WILLIAM BISMARCK,  
*August 23rd, 1884*

His Highness requests that Consul-General Herr Nachtigal be instructed to act in accordance with Count von Caprivi's plan,—a Woremann steamer to the Gaboon—and to hoist the German flag in the territory acquired by the Hansemann-Bleichröder Dyes Company at Walfisch Bay, unless he finds the English already there. His Highness wishes to avoid over-hasty action in the matter, and not to furnish Herr Nachtigal with other instructions than these, before he knows how Baron von Plessen's latest declarations have been received in London (Chargé d'Affaires in London). If England disregards our protest against the action of the Cape Parliament, it will mean a complete break with her. The object is too trivial to justify going to war. Our first object should be rather to create every sort of diplomatic difficulty for England. It would be foolish to hasten on a break with her. If it occurred the situation would have to be accepted, and the natural result would be a nearer rapprochement with France. This, again, would have its disadvantages, for it might occur to France to demand compensation in Lorraine as the price for uniting her policy with ours against England. Therefore we must first ascertain whether England is really ready to break completely with us.<sup>1</sup>

[Two days later, August 25th, Lord Ampthill (Lord Odo Russell) died. His death was a serious loss and inconvenience to British Diplomacy at this critical time, and there was some delay in filling the vacancy. Sir Robert Morier was suggested, but Bismarck refused to consider the idea. Eventually Sir Edward Malet, who had been Consul-General at Cairo, was appointed as Ambassador in Berlin.]

## IV. 79-80

LORD GRANVILLE TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
*August 20th, 1884*

(English in text.)

*Confidential.*

During the last four years I have done my best in accordance with my own feelings and in the interest of England to maintain our excellent relations with Germany.

When you left this country on your way to Russia, we mutually congratulated ourselves, I believe with truth, on our having contributed to the good work.

There appears to be some irritation in Germany, the character and extent of which I have difficulty in appreciating;—our past

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, p. 361.

relations, of which Walmer particularly reminds me, are a reason for me to ask you to assist me.

I really see no causes of difference between the two countries.

I admit that about Angra Pequena there were, although quite unintended, some causes of friction.

But you and I came to a satisfactory understanding, and although a question of form, respecting the convict question, has arisen, my last communication to Count Münster must have solved it.

~~With regard to the Fiji claims, it was we who made great concessions, which appear to have been satisfactory to the Chancellor.~~

~~With regard to the South Sea Islands, I know of no impediment to our coming to a perfect understanding. I can say the same about the Congo.~~

It was with great regret that at the Conference I was obliged to object to any motion of the German Plenipotentiary; after the public declarations made in Parliament, of which the Prince was probably unaware, it was impossible to take any other course.

I, however, immediately afterwards made a communication to Count Münster and his colleagues, which showed that it was from no disinclination to discuss such questions that I acted as I had done.

You will observe that in writing this letter on the strength of our personal and friendly relations, I raise no question as to any reasons of policy founded on the general state of Europe, which might induce Germany to change the very friendly policy which the Chancellor has hitherto on many occasions pursued. My only object is to ascertain whether there is any matter of discussion between the two Governments on which a misunderstanding may exist and which might easily be cleared up.

[Count Herbert Bismarck's reply, written in English, ten days later from Königstein, referred to the state of German public opinion with regard to Colonial enterprise. The long silence of the British Government had aroused suspicions that action was being taken between the British and Cape Governments to nip these aspirations in the bud. The same applied to the Australian Colonies and the South Seas.<sup>1</sup> The attacks by the German Press and the protests of the German Government were directed more against the Colonial Office than the Foreign Office. The coming General Election in Germany made it essential for the Government to be able to announce a satisfactory conclusion to the Colonial dispute. Count Herbert concluded by regretting Lord Ampthill's death as a very great loss and suggested Lord Dufferin or Sir John Savile Lumley as his successor.]

*German Note.*

No direct answer was returned to the above letter. . . . But it may

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 173.

have contributed to the British expression (September 22nd, 1884) of its willingness to 'welcome Germany on those parts of the coast not inside the frontiers of Cape Colony and indeed so far not included amongst the British possessions'.

[Count Herbert ended his visit to England with a series of interviews with the Prince of Wales, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Charles Dilke and Lord Hartington. His reports of them to his father were designed to show that the leading men in English politics united in throwing the blame for past mistakes on Lord Granville and Lord Derby. The interview with Lord Hartington took place at Balmoral on October 1st, 1884. The following extract records a conversation with Lord Hartington.]

#### IV. 85-7

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, DUPPLIN CASTLE, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *October 1st, 1884*

##### *Extract.*

. . . I mentioned Lord Derby's injurious policy and said that there was no way of dealing with a statesman of a character so entirely distrustful, who sees a trap in everything and was himself capable of sharp practice. As an instance I mentioned the episode of eight or ten years ago, when the British had completed an agreement with the Khedive for a kind of protectorate. Lord Derby, having asked for our advice in Berlin and received a favourable reply, let the matter drop, 'because, if Germany advised it, it was sure to be to England's disadvantage'. It was an absurd way of doing business. Lord Hartington did not deny this and said that Derby was by nature too suspicious. He added that he would get Lord Granville to show him my letter (in which Count Herbert requested Lord Granville not to back up the Cape Government in its rash and unjustifiable action) and would discuss the matter with him. 'I only remember,' he continued, 'that at the Cabinet, at which it was decided to accept your occupation of Angra, we arranged to instruct the Cape Government to inform us forthwith what amount of territory it considered absolutely needful, so that the matter might be finally settled.'

I replied that it was just the manner in which Lord Derby despatched this instruction that was so injurious to us. On the 13th of July Lord Granville indicated to me in writing that our point of view was agreed to, and on the 14th Derby telegraphed to the Cape Government to carry out annexations on the West Coast, a course which that Government had been hitherto unwilling to adopt. We heard of it for the first time a fortnight later from our Consul in Cape Town. . . . All this was news to Lord Hartington.

[The news that Lord Derby's colleagues were openly giving him a

bad character was no doubt not displeasing to Prince Bismarck, whose personal dislike of Lord Derby was unbounded.<sup>1]</sup>

#### IV. 88-91

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, PARIS, *October 5th*, 1884

##### *Extract.*

Yesterday afternoon Sir Charles Dilke called on me in London. . . . He blamed Lord Granville's attitude in very sharp terms: 'I cannot tell you how deeply I regret the perverseness and lack of skill in our policy towards you in Colonial matters. You had every right to complain about our silly attitude.<sup>2</sup> The wrong was on our side. I will offer no word of excuse, for none is possible. You had explained to us with the greatest frankness the claims and the course of your policy, and it is unheard of that Lord Granville did not meet your wishes.' . . .

I said that from England's unfriendly attitude—so entirely without motive—we realised that the whole of the English Press, Conservative and Liberal, and above all *The Times*, inspired as it was throughout by Blowitz, was making every effort to irritate France against Germany. This was remarkable in a popular Government like England's, where public opinion and the Press enjoy paramount influence. German public opinion was so incensed by this obvious Press manoeuvre in a country to which we had given strong support, that their whole interest was now directed towards coming to a good understanding with France. Our object is to prevent other nations from regarding our apparently permanent quarrel with France as a chain about our feet which they can drag upon as they please. . . . Lord Granville appeared so far to have valued Germany's friendship no higher than that of Denmark or Greece. But he must by now have learnt from experience the real nature of Germany's powerful position, and that the friendship of such a Power is worth cultivating.

Dilke was clearly pained by my words and said with great seriousness: 'I can only repeat to you that you are right a hundred times. In my confidential conversations with you I have repeatedly said that my whole policy rests always on close association with Germany. Our leaders in foreign affairs have shown a lack of responsibility in falling into disagreement with you, especially now that we are gravely embarrassed. You will not go to the length of declaring war on us on account of Egypt; but France might do this, even though I may believe that the French Republican system will not let matters go so far as to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, pp. 360, 368.

<sup>2</sup> English in text.

make an open breach unavoidable. What we have to consider is France's attitude towards the measures that we shall be forced to take in Egypt.

'We are as ready as ever to spend money for the restoration of Egyptian finances, but can do so only on condition that we are allowed a reduction of the interest. Without this, no English Parliament will sanction the smallest grant. We naturally dislike the methods of the Tribunals; but if they contemplate flouting (*exequieren*) the Egyptian Government, we shall be forced to oppose it and to set aside the Courts of Law, even at the cost of declaring war with France because of it. I can only say that we shall go to war with France if we are compelled, by means of the Tribunals, either to let Egypt go bankrupt or else to give her a blank cheque on the English Treasury. It is for us a case of absolute necessity, which will exonerate us, if we refuse to keep to the Treaties. . . . Egypt has no money left and she must get it from somewhere. The method which we have adopted, seems to us the simplest. Such breaches of a treaty, after all, are not unknown. Russia, for instance, with your support, put out of force an important part of the Treaty of Paris in 1871.' . . . I pointed out that even for a Power as friendly to England as Germany had hitherto shown herself, it was impossible to support a policy so feeble and inconsistent. One never knew what it was aiming at or whether it would not be reversed two days later. 'Well,' said Dilke, 'we have never concealed or failed to make known our final purpose, which is ultimately to evacuate Egypt.' He admitted with a sigh that evacuation would be a very difficult process.

*German Note.*

Writing to Count Münster on November 27th, 1884, Prince Bismarck had complained strongly that confidential communications, addressed by him to Sir Edward Malet, the British Ambassador, had been handed on to Waddington, the French Ambassador in London, in a manner calculated to arouse French suspicions against Germany, particularly on the Egyptian Question. Count Münster drew Lord Granville's attention to the matter at Bismarck's behest, and reported on December 1st that Lord Granville had made every effort to lay the blame on the French statesmen, as though the latter were attempting to deepen the mistrust between England and France.

[In the following letter Prince Bismarck withdrew his charges.<sup>1</sup>]

IV. 91-2

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, *December 5th*, 1884

I request that you will thank Lord Granville for his information, which gives me the impression that the bad complexion given to the matter must partly, at any rate, be ascribed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, p. 370.



to the French communications. You will add confidentially that my suspicions that efforts were being made to disturb our relations towards England and France were first aroused by the tone of the English Press. *The Times* and other influential papers are untiring in their attempts to produce misunderstanding between Germany and France. I have never counted Blowitz, a Bohemian, whose detailed and aggressive article on November 17th will have been noticed by you, as an English writer, but rather as a Frenchman, and I look on his article as voicing the French eagerness to sow suspicion in England against the policy of Germany. . . .

In England we are obliged to deal with two independent powers at the same time. The first, represented by Lord Granville, made use of our good-will in Egypt and elsewhere, for instance, at the present Congo Conference,<sup>1</sup> and imagines that *assurances* of friendship are sufficient return for this. The second power is represented by Lord Derby, who acted inimically at nearly all points of contact with us, either by doing direct injury to our interests through his agents, or by failing to hold the officials of his Department (Ressort) in check. British agents have been busied in cutting our acquisitions in the Cameroons off from the mountains and the Eastern Hinterland. We hear from Samoa that British agents have been interfering with our good relations with the natives. Sir Charles Warren's appointment<sup>2</sup> as Commissioner not only in Bechuanaland, which is delimited neither geographically nor politically, but in the 'territories and lands bordering on it', and the undisguised criticism this appointment has met with in Parliament, proves that the object is to hem in our acquisitions at Angra Pequena (einschnüren). England's Colonial possessions are so great, that her interests cannot surely be injured by any German trading establishments.

Cf. German White-Books. The first official publications on Togoland and Biafra Bay; Angra Pequena; the South Seas, December, 1884. Fiji, January, 1885. On 'German Interests in the South Seas'; White-Books, Nos. 28, 31 and 42.

#### IV. 96

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, *January 25th, 1885*  
*Extract.*

I have received your Reports and with regard to the principal question I will remark that we accept, as a basis for negotiations, the British proposals made in reply to the French suggestions

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, p. 369.

regarding Egypt,<sup>1</sup> and are ready to support them with the rest of the Powers.<sup>2</sup> . . .

The detailed Reports upon Egypt, which Your Excellency sent by the last messenger, interesting as they are objectively, cause me to fear that you are paying more attention to the Nile than to Colonial questions.

I repeat, therefore, that everything to do with Egypt is only of secondary interest to us, but that the Colonial question is already a matter of life and death for reasons of domestic policy. I hope that my last despatches, as well as the recent debates in the Reichstag, may have caused you to realise the bearing of this question on our internal politics. Public opinion in Germany lays so great a stress on our Colonial Policy, that the Government's position in the country actually depends on its success. I beg you, therefore, not to forget that Egypt in itself is quite indifferent to us and is merely a means of overcoming England's objections to our Colonial aspirations. The smallest corner of New Guinea or West Africa, even if quite worthless in itself, is just now of greater import to our policy than the whole of Egypt and its future.

[After reference to a hostile article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 22nd, 1885, the Prince instructed Count Münster to enter a protest against recent British action in the Cameroons.]

I beg that you will speak to Lord Granville about this matter as well as our protest against the British proceedings in New Guinea, which is dealt with in a separate despatch.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding New Guinea, Lord Granville had declared to us officially (October 9th, 1884. See German White-Book—'German Interests in the South Seas', No. 31) that the occupation of the South Coast had been effected 'without prejudice to the rest'. It is obvious that this can only mean 'without prejudice to any claims to possession in other parts of the island', for when England recognises in its turn the German occupation on the North coast 'without prejudice to the rest', it refers to the frontiers on that coast.

If the British Government lets itself be forced by aggressive articles in the Press, to seize upon a part of the already conceded North side of New Guinea, and also, in the manner of the Portuguese, to disinter some ancient and obsolete rights over Lucia Bay,<sup>4</sup> which England never at any time had need of, you must yourself feel the sarcasm contained in Lord Granville's assertion of his willingness to meet our wishes. . . .

[Then, turning to the subject of Egypt the Prince wrote:]

Our equal right to representation on the Commission (of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 137 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, 433.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, 371, 430.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II, 369

Debt) has not lapsed on account of our having abstained hitherto. Our right is proved by the fact that all the Treaties concerning Egypt and the East should be treated as a solid whole, and all the Signatory Powers have an equal right in seeing that they are maintained and carried out. England, least of all, is justified in disputing this equality, for she has twice already violated this condition, first by the bombardment of Alexandria—the source of all the trouble,—and now by her repudiation of the Finance Laws.

If a single Power is to disregard the Treaties relating to the East, the obligation to observe them disappears for all the rest, and if now the completion of the Debt Commission is to be still further postponed by England's dilatory '*discussions* on the best method of *discussing* how the Commission shall be increased', it would be more straightforward and honest, if England simply maintained her refusal to participate. But even her present apparent and partial concessions would have made a friendlier impression upon us if they had been made earlier. Instead of this they have caused their protégé, the Khedive, in no courteous fashion to reduce us to expounding our rights—which were secured by Treaty—to the other Powers, and to turn the cold shoulder to us and Russia.

[Count Herbert Bismarck paid a further visit at this time to London, staying with Lord Rosebery. His instructions were to obtain a final settlement of the Colonial difficulties. Mr. Gladstone was determined to regain the good-will of Germany, and his Government were prepared to make expensive concessions overseas.<sup>1</sup> The Count held with Lord Granville a conversation, in which he put the German case so strongly, that the meeting had to be broken off somewhat abruptly in the end.]

#### IV. 101

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *March 7th*,  
1885

#### *Extract.*

I said to Lord Granville that we were under the impression that England desired to make trouble between us and France and, if possible, Russia, and that Englishmen considered that it would profit their country for the Continental Powers to be at war together. England would meanwhile be free to pursue her trading activities. My words produced violent gesticulations and exclamations of annoyance, combined with strong protestations from Lord Granville. . . . He hardly ever lets one say five words or a single sentence, without interrupting or getting up to make a note at a side-table. . . . The next morning, however, the Minister was in a much milder mood. . . . The four or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, 430.

five other conversations that I have had with Lord Granville passed more and more smoothly and pleasantly, until finally this evening he said that he was ready to make liberal concessions in the Cameroons, so as to prove the good-will of England. . . .

I have held long conversations with Lord Granville's colleagues . . . and in particular with Dilke, who again impresses me as the most business-like of all the British Ministers. He is evidently as convinced as ever of the importance of remaining friendly with Germany. The substance of his remarks is as follows :—

Lord Granville will remain in office as long as the present Cabinet is in power. . . . But even if Gladstone retired after the Parliamentary Redistribution Bill and Derby were set aside, Hartington would find a difficulty in getting rid of Granville ; thus the latter is for you not a *quantité négligeable* and you will have to deal chiefly with him. Also, he is so jealous of me, that I would beg you not to mention our interview to him.

There are five points which are engaging our attention, and after hearing with interest all your complaints, which I largely recognise, but in points had to contest from the British point of view, I sum them up as follows :—

1. I think little of the claims in Fiji. A few of them are justifiable, but the majority are fictitious, and the German subjects concerned are several of them of doubtful existence. But we have given way to your pressure in this matter, and although I have but a poor opinion of them as a whole, I shall say no more about them.

2. About New Guinea there is evidently a misunderstanding on both sides. I have examined the matter closely, and I must admit that the vagueness of the drafting of the terms gives you some justification. The mistake has been in choosing inexact terms for so important a matter. But I have now no doubt that we have arrived at a mutually satisfactory understanding, and I consider the affair settled. I myself should have wished we had let New Guinea go altogether. This was prevented by the absurd line Australia takes. Nevertheless I think that annexation by Germany is a mistake, and that you will in time have a great deal of trouble there.

Australia is expanding in strength and population. In a generation or two, when perhaps she may have broken away from us, she will feel strong enough to wage war, like the old European Powers, and will clear out all foreigners from her neighbourhood. The great distance will make it difficult for Germany to fight Australia and she will be forced into the awkward situation of having to evacuate New Guinea. However, that is your affair.

3. The Cameroons. Thanks to the folly and sluggishness of our people we have come there too late, but we have accepted your position fully and loyally. I know all about it, for two years ago I arranged the annexation myself, and I can assure you *que nous en avons fait notre deuil*, and our sole intention is to leave you a free hand there and to treat you fairly. Any other course is folly and is owing to the jealousy of local influences, and it will not be permitted.

4. Santa Lucia and Zanzibar. We must have the first of these for purely political reasons.

I attach little importance to the whole of Cape Colony, but public opinion and tradition make it necessary for us to keep others out of it, on account of the Boers and the Zulus. I regret that this has not before been explained to you clearly and openly.

Zanzibar is important to us. Though it is independent, we have a highly developed trade and many nationals there, who are closely connected with India, and we must maintain an especially preponderant position on that coast.

As regards the Hinterland now occupied by Germans, we formerly refused the request for annexation made by British subjects. Therefore you have a free hand and justification, and I think that that territory is by far the best of all your Colonial settlements. I hope you may prosper there, so long as you leave Zanzibar in peace. Public opinion here will also accept your establishments in the Cameroons and behind Zanzibar, if you allow the greatest possible freedom of trade. But it will oppose it, if you adopt the French or Portuguese system of exclusion.

5. The South Sea Islands. This is the widest field for German colonisation, and I will use all my influence to secure all possible freedom for you. The claims put forward by our Colonies are utterly unreasonable, and we shall pay no attention to them.

I thanked Dilke for his frank words and said that nothing was further from our intentions than to interfere with the independence of Zanzibar. . . .

I had 20 minutes' conversation with Mr. Gladstone after a dinner at Rosebery's. He said: 'Even if you had had no colonial aspirations, I should beseech you to go forward in this direction. I rejoice at your civilising aspirations, and at the next opportunity I shall advocate them in Parliament even more strongly than I did in Scotland last Autumn. (In Edinburgh on September 1st, 1884.) I promise you that we shall meet you in an entirely friendly spirit, provided that you do not mix other political questions with the Colonial question.'

There is no point in discussing the foreign policy of a great country with Mr. Gladstone, as he has no comprehension of it whatever. . . .

Lord Granville complained . . . that much unpleasantness had been caused to England by our refusal, in spite of his request, to advise him beforehand of the publication of most of our White-Books. The publication of your interview with Mr. Meade, in particular, had been most painful to him.<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Malet's confidential despatch had been published in answer to it, which Lord Granville now frankly regretted, when I made my complaint about it. In the interests of our relations he intends to publish no more without reference to us. . . .

[Mr. Robert Meade was the British Representative at the Berlin Conference on African Affairs. Prince Bismarck assailed him with a bitter complaint about the ingratitude of the British Government. (See English Blue-Book, February, 1883, No. 148a. Also the *Nord-deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* for March 2nd, 1885.)]

Whenever I have met the younger and more advanced members of the Cabinet, I have spoken of the behaviour of the Press of both sides and have pointed out the mischief which many English papers—especially *The Times*—have worked, by their efforts to set Germany and France against each other, on public opinion in Germany. I observed that in newspaper editors' offices, clubs, hotels, etc., *The Times* was the only English paper that was taken in, and that when translations were reproduced in German papers, no distinction was drawn between letters from correspondents and leading articles.

An article in our papers, beginning with '*The Times* says', followed by the unspeakable (unqualifizierbaren) diatribes of the Paris Correspondent, would be regarded in Germany as the expression of British public opinion and produce general exasperation and bitterly worded retorts. That the German Press was not to be controlled was manifest in the attitude adopted by the Liberal Press, in particular, in the summer of 1882, when Germany was rendering substantial services to England, whereas England's action in Egypt was being heavily attacked by the journalists. Although the Government could afford to pay no attention to them, nevertheless, the strong pressure of public opinion, acting in a particular direction, made the task of carrying out as friendly a policy as it wished, unnecessarily difficult.

These gentlemen heartily agreed with my exposition and promised to do their uttermost to induce *The Times* to cease opening its columns in future to its correspondents uncontrolled.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville, II, 372, 426.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Busch's *Bismarck*, III, p. 60 seq.

## IV. 107

PRINCE BISMARCK TO RADOWITZ, AMBASSADOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 15th, 1885*

*Extract.*

Lord Granville's utterances in the House of Lords on February 27th concerning Egypt, and our apparent concessions, made it necessary for me to reply, little as I like discussing diplomatic affairs before Parliament. It was, however, unavoidable, for I could not allow the Sultan and his Government to remain under the impression that I was proposing to settle with other Powers the affairs of parts of the Turkish Empire. As it was, these incorrect statements on the part of the British Foreign Secretary placed me in a false position before the other Signatory Powers. The happenings in Egypt and the Red Sea have already destroyed some of the authority of the Treaties concerning the East, and it does not suit German policy to contribute by its action to the strengthening of this influence. Moreover, the present moment, when the Powers are on the point of concluding new Treaties regarding Egypt is not the right one for weakening the credit of these Treaties by disparaging the former ones, which still are in force.

I have never made suggestions in the sense indicated by Lord Granville, either to this or to the former British Government. The Memorandum of September, 1882, which I used in my speech of March 2nd (i.e. the Prince's repudiation of Lord Granville's statement that the Prince had advised the British Government to take Egypt), as well as a number of others, which are to be found in our archives, will vouch for the fact that my opinion has always been that the rights of the Sultan must above all be respected.

I have never mentioned my views on these matters to any English Cabinet Minister, but only to Lord Ampthill. In answer to a question by him I explained that I appreciated England's need of assured communications with India through Egypt, and that the influence upon Egypt, which England considered necessary on these grounds, could be attained quite well by means of friendly and skilful negotiations with the Sultan and could be exercised with his co-operation, and I added that we

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE AFGHAN BOUNDARY DISPUTE

### THE THREAT OF WAR BETWEEN ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

[In 1839 the Emperor Nicolas despatched an expedition for the purpose of annexing the province of Khiva to the Russian Empire. The expedition perished in the deserts, and nothing of striking importance happened to show the world the intentions of Russian policy in Asia, until she annexed Samarcand in 1868. Further Russian advances towards the borders of Afghanistan were during the succeeding years anxiously watched by British statesmen, in spite of assurances that actual annexations were not contemplated. In 1873 the British Government became convinced that an agreement must be reached with Russia as to what were to be considered the actual Northern limits of Afghanistan. Finally, after the annexation of Merv in 1884 had brought the Russians almost on to the Afghan frontier, the Russian Government agreed to send a Commissioner, General Zelenoi, to meet Sir Peter Lumsden, the British Commissioner, on the frontier, so that the Question of the Boundary should be settled on the spot. Lumsden, arriving there on November 19th, 1884, found no one to meet him, for the Russians had discovered that delay was all in their favour and announced that Zelenoi had been prevented from starting by illness.<sup>1</sup> Russia considered herself protected in the West by her Secret Treaty of 1884 with Germany, and therefore free to apply herself whole-heartedly to her designs in Central Asia.<sup>2</sup> By March, 1885, the possibility of war between England and Russia was considered as imminent.]

[The history of the dealings of Russia and England with Afghanistan is fully described in J. Holland Rose's *Development of the European Nations*, 1870-1900, p. 365 seq.]

#### IV. III

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, BERLIN,  
March 25th, 1885

In the course of the last weeks in conversation with British Ministers I was repeatedly asked for my opinion on the Afghan Frontier dispute, and also whether we have received any news regarding the feeling and intentions of Russia.

I very carefully refrained from answering these questions, merely remarking that, when I left Berlin, nothing fresh had

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II, p. 407 seq.    <sup>2</sup> *Idem.*, p. 422.



come to my knowledge and that therefore I possessed no information. But all who knew the Emperor of Russia knew also that he is by nature inclined to peace, and that on that account it ought not to be difficult for the British Government to arrive at some agreement in Afghanistan.

Lord Rosebery, who spoke in the greatest detail on the subject, gave his views thus: 'It matters more to us what is the temper of the Ameer of Afghanistan than whether the frontier line is drawn a few miles to the North or South. If he feels himself endangered by the Russian advance and appeals to us for help to protect him against loss of territory at the hands of the Russians, we cannot leave him in the lurch.

'If we did so, he would ascribe it to weakness on our side and would promptly throw himself into the arms of Russia, and all our influence and foothold in Afghanistan would be gone for ever. The Ameer would become a mere vassal of Russia. We must prevent this by every means, even by resorting to arms. The struggle, if it comes off, will be for domination in Afghanistan, but naturally not in that country alone. It will be directed by us against every accessible part of Russia. I imagine that the Sultan would gladly seize such an opportunity to join with us against Russia. He can never hope for a better chance of recovering his lost territory (BISMARCK: '*Or of losing the remainder.*') and a diversion by Turkey on the Russian border, so as to hold up the greater part of the Russian Army, would be a very welcome alleviation for England.

'Our clumsy foreign policy of recent years has done much to estrange the Sultan from us, I admit. But in a war between England and Russia it would be to his interest to fight on our side. Our mistakes of policy in connexion with the Sultan will teach us to avoid similar treatment of the Ameer to the extent of driving him into the arms of Russia, for this would involve a great danger for India.'

The first Secretary of the Russian Embassy in London told me that the Emperor Alexander could not possibly withdraw from the positions, once taken up. The Russian Empire had nothing to fear from a war with England. The continuous land communications of the basis of operations in Central Asia, with all its resources, made her much stronger there than England. Moreover, in case of need she could set up rival pretenders against the present Ameer and stir up the warlike Afghans against one another by means of a Civil war.

*German Note.*

It appeared as if the war danger had been averted by an agreement arrived at between the two Governments on March 16th, 1885, by which the Russian troops were to abstain from any advance into the

territory under dispute; but at the end of that month a Russian forward movement to Penjdeh brought nearer the possibility of military complications, including a menace to Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

[It was now the turn of Russia to sound Germany.]

#### IV. 112

SCHWEINITZ, AMBASSADOR IN ST. PETERSBURG, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 8th*, 1885

*Cipher telegram.*

Concerning the approaching possibility of war with England, M. de Giers has begged leave of the Emperor Alexander to discuss with me Article III of the Secret Treaty of March 27th, 1884. The Minister requested me to inquire of Your Highness regarding the practical application of line 3 of this Article, particularly the words 'pour la prévenir si une pareille infraction était à prévoir'. Report follows.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV. 113.

PRINCE BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, *April 9th*, 1885

*Telegram. Secret.*

To be deciphered by yourself.

The news from the Afghan frontier makes war between England and Russia more probable than it was. If war breaks out, the Treaty of the three Empires (that of June 18th, 1881) will come into action; in particular Article III, Line 3.<sup>3</sup> Turkey's participation in the war would tend more to spread it over the rest of Europe than would be possible if Turkey were neutral. I have therefore instructed our Ambassador in St. Petersburg to use his influence to maintain Turkey's neutrality, and I hope to persuade the Vienna Cabinet in this sense, since both the existing Treaty and also our common interests indicate that we should hold ourselves aloof from this war. Inquire whether Count Kalnoky is ready to give similar instructions to Baron Calice (Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople). Diplomatic, or even more active measures, would seem to me to be advisable in the event of Turkey's wishing to join in the war, whether from inclination or fear. If the Three-Emperor Alliance fails at the present crisis, it would, I fear, react on the external and internal security of the three Empires. We cannot be attacked, if we hold together.

[The question whether the duties of Turkey as a Neutral involved her continuing to close the Dardanelles to belligerent fleets or not, now became the question of the hour. Germany took the initiative in insisting,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Granville's 'Life', II, p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 107.

not only that the Straits should be closed to the British Fleet, but that strong defences should be erected on the heights above them.]

## IV. 114

SCHWEINITZ, ST. PETERSBURG, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*April 13th, 1885*

M. de Giers said to me that he had commissioned the Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin to report on Your Highness' views as to whether it would not be feasible to invite the French Government (BISMARCK: '*It has been done.*') to urge Turkey, as from itself, to stand by her treaty obligation of keeping the Dardanelles closed.

The Minister indicated that it might be possible, in this connexion, to create a 'ligue des neutres', even if not to the extent of that of the Empress Catharine II.

## IV. 116

BARON DE COURCEL, FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN, TO COUNT  
HATZFELDT, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 14th, 1885*

*Précis.*

In response to Prince Bismarck's suggestion M. Freycinet ordered the French Chargé d'Affaires in Constantinople to represent to the Porte that the opening of the Straits to the ships of any foreign Power would constitute a breach of the Treaties and involve Turkey in great risks.

## IV. 114-5

RADOWITZ, AMBASSADOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE, TO PRINCE  
BISMARCK, *April 13th, 1885*

*Very confidential.*

There is much discussion here in political and military circles regarding the likelihood of British operations against the Dardanelles, in case the Turks refuse a free passage. The English residents themselves consider it probable. As regards the defensibility of the Straits with the means now available, I must refer you to my earlier Report, and must reserve further information until advised by an expert military authority. Up till now the Porte has not made the smallest preparation in connexion with this object.

The main difficulty, even if sufficient means existed for repelling an attempt to force the Straits, would lie in deciding on the right moment for making use of them. The Grand Visir, of whom I inquired orally to-day whether Turkey was prepared to uphold her right of closing by force, said in confidence that it would certainly be difficult to obtain the necessary orders from high

quarters. He thought that nothing could be done without such orders, and promised to set about the matter without delay.

M. de Nelidoff considers early preparations essential, because these may prevent any attempt at forcing the Straits. But he has little belief in the necessary energy, when the decisive moment arrives.

Postscript. I have just received a copy (enclosed) of a Report by Major Ristoff, now acting here as Brigadier-General of Artillery, on the possibility of defending the Dardanelles, founded on conversations with Admiral Starke and other expert authorities. I have recommended these officers (BISMARCK: '*Not to be done.*') to take the initiative through the proper channels with the heads of the Turkish Army and point out the necessity of immediate measures for defending the Straits, as being to the military interests of Turkey. (BISMARCK: '*He is exceeding his instructions.*')

[On April 28, 1885, the Ambassador was able to report that a Commission of generals had left for the Dardanelles to decide upon measures for closing the Straits.]

#### IV. 116

#### PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS IN VIENNA TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 15th, 1885*

At to-day's reception of the Diplomatic Corps the British Ambassador, Sir A. Paget, discussed unofficially with Count Kalnoky the question of the closing of the Straits. . . . He wished to make it clear that, in the event of a conflict between England and Russia, closing the Straits would be very injurious to England, and of great advantage to Russia, and could therefore not be counted as strict neutrality.

Count Kalnoky tried to explain the incorrectness of this theory to the Ambassador and quoted Switzerland as an instance, the neutrality of which in 1870 had been of assistance to the French alone, and yet had been respected by the Germans. Such an interpretation of the Treaties was very questionable. Unfortunately Austria-Hungary could not prevent two Powers, friendly to herself, from making war on each other. But if this was inevitable, the business must be confined to Asia. The Vienna Cabinet had no desire to see war break out on the Danube and Save; but this would happen without a doubt, if the Porte's neutrality were not respected by one of the belligerents. Therefore the Vienna Government was determined to use every effort to support Turkey in maintaining her neutrality.

Sir Augustus Paget, who thinks war unavoidable, complained that he found so little sympathy here for the English point of view, and that the Press was also unfriendly. England had no

friend left on the Continent. He would not say who was the cause of this.

The Italian Ambassador spoke to Count Kalnoky nearly in the same sense as his English colleague . . . (BISMARCK: '*Then no more treaties at all with England are possible.*')

[Italy evidently altered her policy, for von Radowitz reported on April 24th, 1885, from Constantinople, that Count Corti had changed his tone and now counts on a 'League of the Neutrals' to localise the war.]

#### IV. 117-8

RADOWITZ, CONSTANTINOPLE, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*April 23rd, 1885*

*Cipher telegram.*

The Sultan sent word to me by Reschid Bey, his Private Secretary, that he had received very confidential information from London that war was inevitable. He had also heard that English officers had been secretly reconnoitring the Dardanelles, and it was certain that England intended to win an entrance. In accordance with the advice received, and following Turkish interests, he intended to declare strict neutrality and defend the entrance to the Dardanelles, if need be. But Turkey would run a great risk, if England were to treat the refusal of free passage as a hostile act and were to reply by threatening Egypt and points on the coast of Turkey. He must first ask Berlin and Vienna personally and confidentially how far he might count on their help in maintaining the neutrality of the Straits. . . . His war news came from Hassan Fehmi (Minister of Justice, then on a mission in London, to establish the Sultan's sovereign rights in Egypt). . . .

*German Note.*

On April 21st, 1885, the British Government demanded a large war credit (£11,000,000) in view of the strained relations with Russia. The First Reading was passed in the House of Commons by a large majority on May 4th, and the Second Reading on May 11th. However, the Government's statement in Parliament left room for friendly negotiations with Russia. The British wished to refer the question as to whether Russia's action at Penjdeh had violated the Agreement of March 16th,<sup>1</sup> to arbitration by a foreign sovereign. The Emperor William I was first thought of; but the proposal did not meet with success, although Russia accepted it in principle. The two Governments, however, agreed to continue peaceful negotiations for the settlement of the Afghan Boundary, which were not concluded until September 10th. The compliant temper of the British Government was influenced by the united stand made by the other European Powers on the Dardanelles question. In England it was on several occasions sharply criticised as weakness. In the debate of May 4th in the House of Commons Lord Randolph Churchill came forward as the interpreter of this point of view.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 196.

## IV. 119-20

COUNT MÜNSTER TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, *May 1st,*  
1885

*Very confidential.*

The feeling, as regards peace or war, in England is bellicose one day and peaceful the next without any settled reason. The Press and the Stock Exchange have much to do with it. Both Staal here and Thornton in St. Petersburg see very black. The latter up till now had placed great hopes in the peaceful intentions of the Tsar and M. de Giers. The Duchess of Edinburgh, whom I have met several times, thought at first that her brother, the Tsar, certainly did not wish for war and would stop it. But now she herself sees that her brother can no longer withstand the military party, and she seems to assume that Ignatieff will resume the helm and fears that there will be war.

*German Note.*

When Giers was appointed Foreign Minister in 1882, Ignatieff was dismissed from his post as Minister of the Interior.

The Prince of Wales, who returned from Ireland a few days ago, is very bellicose.

It is impossible to report or prophesy about the state of the negotiations between England and Russia. The Russian reply, for which the Russians seem intentionally to be waiting, will, Staal thinks, be a refusal, joined with an attempt not to cut the threads altogether.<sup>1</sup>

Gladstone has gained credit by his speech in Parliament. He is said to feel himself personally treated with ingratitude by Russia and now means to represent the side of energy in the Cabinet.

## IV. 120

COUNT MÜNSTER, IN LONDON, TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
*May 4th, 1885*

The thought that there will be no war gives universal satisfaction here, but with the reservation that it is impossible to trust the Russians, and that the time for peace-rejoicings is not yet. The Opposition is furious, and Lord Randolph Churchill made a speech which greatly impressed the House. The statements by Gladstone and Granville were received in both Houses in dead and chilly silence. This morning the news vendors had quite a good joke about Churchill's speech. They cried 'War declared against Russia,' and then in a low voice, 'By Lord Randolph Churchill!'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Staatsarchiv*, Vol. XLVI, p. 20.

Staal (Russian Ambassador in London) is delighted, and the Russians here do, or pretend to, consider peace assured. Lessar alone (Russian Diplomatic Agent in Transcaspia, appointed a member of the Afghan Boundary Commission, as the man best acquainted with conditions in Central Asia), with his intimate knowledge of the officers in the Caucasus, expressed yesterday to a friend of mine his great fear of some *coup de tête* on the border. Waddington and Nigra (French and Italian Ambassadors) are still somewhat sceptical about peace, but regard it rather as a breathing space, and a very clever move on the part of the Russians.

Reports received by Waddington from Paris indicate that Mohrenheim and the Russians in Paris were yesterday still using very bellicose language.

There is a danger that the Military party in Russia may organise a second Penjdeh, or again, that Russia's consent, in respect of the boundary and the conditions discussed by Dufferin (Viceroy of India) with, and to some extent guaranteed to the Ameer, may after all not be obtained from her; and lastly, that Russia may refuse the guarantees on the border and in Herat, which are demanded by England. There is anxiety also in Government circles regarding Dufferin and India, for according to a telegram received to-day there is considerable anger at the Cabinet's having given in.

Staal and Granville both stated to my colleagues that they had not yet discussed the actual sovereign (to be selected as arbitrator). I am refraining from asking, as everyone naturally thinks of our Emperor. Otherwise it would be the King of Denmark. In Russia he would be popular, here less so; but the Ministers hardly like to say it on account of the Prince of Wales (whose wife was a Danish Princess) and will still accept him. Here they would prefer the German Emperor, or if not him, then the King of the Belgians.

#### IV. 122

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, VIENNA, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1885

*Secret.*

The Emperor of Austria, to whom I had the honour of speaking at a Court function at Ofen, was visibly delighted at the peaceful turn which the Anglo-Russian dispute has taken. He could not refrain from expressing to me his astonishment at the compliant attitude of the British Cabinet, which may possibly affect unfavourably her prestige in Asia. Though he is not surprised at the English Prime Minister's having compromised his country's

interests in just as lighthearted a fashion as he did in Egyptian and other matters, he would hardly have thought it possible that he would allow British policy to play so lamentable a part.

Prince Lobanoff said to the Emperor that Europe had to thank Austria and the attitude of Germany for peace, for England must have seen from it that she had no friends on the Continent. This conviction had obviously much to do with making the British Cabinet come to terms.

England's compliance caused Count Andrassy, whom I have seen daily in Pesth, to express to me his suspicion in confidence that the peaceful settlement in Asia, which, according to him, was for one of the parties only a postponement, had probably been bought by British promises to Russia on some other terrain. (BISMARCK: '!'). He complains that the useful counterweight, which England has hitherto used against the Russian power in Central Asia, (BISMARCK: '?') is now threatened with extinction by England's political retreat. . . .

[Both Germany and Austria had reason to be apprehensive of Russia's intentions, if she were all too victorious in Asia. The Ambassador in Vienna described an interview that he had had with Count Kalnoky on May 4th, 1885. He wrote :]

He believes that the present Russian Government means to keep its treaties, but he points to the possibility that another one might follow other aims. Supposing Russia were to prove victorious against England in Asia, he would have reason to fear that the resulting consciousness of power and the characteristic Russian arrogance might easily lead her to interfere with Austro-Hungarian interests on the Bosphorus and in the whole of the Balkan Peninsula. (BISMARCK: '*Really? Even after the victorious Turkish War the one need for Russia was recovery.*') These interests depended on the status quo remaining undisturbed. He saw no reason whatever to fear that this rise in Russian prestige would throw the whole Slav world into commotion (Gärung). . . .

[According to the following Memorandum by Count Herbert Bismarck, dated May 17th, 1885, Lord Granville did actually approach the Russian Government with a proposal that Russia and England should jointly request the German Emperor to accept the office of arbitrator, and Russia had refused to consider the suggestion.]

#### IV. 123-4

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, May 17th, 1885

The British Ambassador informed me yesterday that Lord Granville had addressed a direct invitation to the Russian Government to join the British Government in requesting His Majesty the (German) Emperor to mediate on the unsettled



point of dispute between the two Powers, regarding the Afghanis-tan affair. The Russian reply was that there was reason to believe that such a question would not be welcome in Berlin. For this reason the Emperor Alexander was unwilling to approach His Majesty and so declined to ask for German mediation.

Sir E. Malet expressed to me his regret at this turn of affairs. He said that it had been the earnest wish of his Government that His Majesty might give the arbitral award; (BISMARCK: '*On what point? On the military question, which has been excluded?*' ) but if Russia did not turn to us with a similar request, it would naturally have to be renounced.

I stated that this last argument was quite correct and added that not the slightest indication had come to us from Russia of any inclination of the Emperor Alexander to ask for our mediation, and that we naturally could not consider a request coming from one of the parties only.

The British Ambassador said that Lord Granville would be glad to make it publicly known that he had suggested mediation by Germany, (BISMARCK: '*Secretly and from one party only!*' ) and he intended to do this, as soon as publication became desirable.

[Prince Bismarck's anxiety on the score of Russia took a rather different form. Underlying his general policy was the determination to prevent any coalition of Powers being formed against Germany. With a view to preventing the German Emperor from appearing as arbitrator in the Afghan dispute, he addressed a letter to him, in which he pointed to certain articles in *The Times*, which seemed to favour some such coalition.]

#### IV. 124

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE EMPEROR WILLIAM I, *May 27th*, 1885

Your Majesty will have observed recently the repeated allusions in our papers to articles in *The Times*, which suggest with some brusqueness that Germany should come forward in the rôle of peacemaker in the Afghan dispute. Moreover, *The Times* and some French papers have been asserting that Germany's desire is for war between England and Russia, and that we have done our best to prejudice the hope of peace.

This assertion, for which neither the attitude of Your Majesty's Government nor the German Press have given cause, must be ascribed to the efforts of *The Times* to arouse suspicion of Germany and to pave the way for a British alliance with France and Russia in an anti-German sense. This is the policy urged by the French, and especially the Orleanist papers. In any case it is no interest of Germany's to discourage Russia from seeking employment for her Army in Asia, rather than in Europe. If the Russian Army, which ever since the 1856 Peace had been languishing in badly appointed peace-time garrisons and was

inclining to Nihilism, had not been sent in 1877 to fight against Turkey, it would have sought and found employment against Austria. The Russian Army, unemployed, is a danger to the inner security of the Empire and the dynasty. Failing employment in Asia, it would have necessarily to be sought on the Western frontier. When quite lately there was a prospect of peace in Asia, a strengthening of the artillery on the Western frontier, and more energetic overhauling of the fortresses on that side took place. . . . Moreover, the Press in several countries expressed the desire and expectation that the settlement of the Afghan conflict might lead to an understanding and an alliance between England and Russia.

The significance of this is greater than that of ordinary newspaper articles, for the idea there expressed of an Anglo-Russian alliance is entertained by the Pan-Slavist party, whose policy includes war with Austria, and later on with Germany. This alliance also forms part of Gladstone's programme, as declared in the House of Commons. Should it be realised, with its pretended Christian and anti-Turkish, but really pan-Slavist and Radical tendencies, the possibility would be open that this alliance at any time, if necessary, could be strengthened by the addition of France, supposing the Anglo-Russian policy met with resistance in Germany. It would form a basis for a coalition against us, than which nothing could be more of a menace to Germany.

Hence, there is a certain temptation for Germany to promote enmity rather than too friendly relations between England and Russia. But we have conscientiously withstood it and have done nothing to make war more likely. But having practised this abnegation from general motives of Christianity, we owe it to the German nation to avoid any course that may lead to our relieving England of Russia's enmity by drawing it upon ourselves.

In order to produce this result, the very slightest direct or indirect pressure on Russia would suffice, or even a friendly recommendation to her to keep the peace.

There is no doubt that Russia would not enter into a war with England, if, during it, she had to fear danger from Germany or Austria. The result of the slightest suggestion of this would be to incline her to peace with England, but also to arouse once again the mistrust of us, which was allayed with so much trouble, and finally to direct the spear-point of Russian policy exclusively to the West. On this account we have taken the greatest care not to allow the slightest possible indication to reach St. Petersburg which might be interpreted as a pressure, or only as a hint, that your Majesty desired that Russia should remain at peace.

For it is impossible for such a desire to be mooted between two Great Powers directly or indirectly, without an implied threat in the event of the desire not being fulfilled. The most friendly form in the world could not free it from this danger. Thus, Your Majesty's Government, in observing an unqualified reserve in respect of all offers of advice for the maintenance of peace, is but carefully studying its own peace and its own neighbourly relations with Russia, on which the German nation may count. There is no predilection at all in favour of disputes and wars, which may arise between two states friendly to ourselves, nor any greedy calculations, depending for their success on these disputes,—but we are merely doing our duty in preserving the friendly relations of the German Empire towards its Eastern neighbour, which have now happily been restored.

[The next document of this series is a Report by the German Military Attaché in London (July 16th, 1885), giving details of the War Office plans for two Expeditionary Forces in the event of War with Russia. The first involved a landing at Trebizond or Poti, combined with a demonstration against Odessa, and the second, an attack up the Tigris with the base in the Persian Gulf.]

CHAPTER XIV  
THE ANGLO-GERMAN RAPPROCHEMENT OF  
1885

[Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet fell on June 8th, 1885, and Lord Salisbury undertook to form the new Tory Ministry. He lost little time in making known to Prince Bismarck that the policy of his Party was to be one of friendship towards Germany, and also his wish for a peaceful solution of the Afghan Question with Russia.]

IV. 131

COUNT MÜNSTER TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 26th,*  
1885

*Cipher telegram.*

Lord Salisbury received the Diplomatic Corps to-day. He was very friendly and declared that a leading principle of the Conservative Party would be to reach and maintain a good understanding with Germany.

He begged me to inform Your Highness that he hoped that his past actions would vouch for his intention to do his utmost to establish and maintain a relationship, such as existed in Lord Beaconsfield's time.

Regarding the general situation, Lord Salisbury expressed the hope that an understanding would soon be arrived at with Russia on the Afghanistan question.

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO COUNT MÜNSTER, *June 29th,*  
1885

*Telegram.*

With regard to your telegram I request you to say to Lord Salisbury that the Chancellor thanks him for his message, and learns with great satisfaction that the new Ministry will hold to the Conservative tradition of a good understanding with Germany. He considers this to the interests of both States and recalls the time with pleasure, when he was in direct friendly relations with Lord Salisbury.

## V. 132

COUNT MÜNSTER TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 29th*,  
1885

*Cipher telegram.*

Telegram received and contents communicated to Lord Salisbury immediately. He was visibly pleased and expressed to me his hearty thanks for this welcome news. He constantly recalls the Prince's words that European peace was assured, if Germany, England and Austria held together.

LORD SALISBURY TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *July 2nd*, 1885

*Private letter.*

I have so lively a recollection of the kindness which Your Highness showed me in Berlin in the years 1876 and 1878, that I venture to take advantage of Baron von Plessen's journey to send these few lines to call myself to your remembrance.

I have asked him to communicate to Your Highness my own convictions as to the future of English politics, which may aid you in forming a judgment, and which may perhaps tend to restore the good understanding between the two countries, which we value as of extreme importance, but which in recent times has been slightly clouded. I think you may reasonably ~~count~~ on a continuity of policy in this matter.

I do not know what the real intentions of the Russian Cabinet are; but our wish is distinctly for peace.

To speak candidly, our railway towards Candahar will not be finished for two years; and I believe Russia is in precisely the same condition. We have both therefore the strongest interest in keeping the peace for that time, if no longer; but I hope it may be for much longer.

I am very anxious to bring out the nine millions loan, as many persons are suffering, and much embarrassment is caused for want of it. I commend heartily to Your Highness's consideration the suggestions on this subject that I have made through the Ambassador.

*German Note.*

The Convention on Egyptian Finance, signed on March 17th, 1885, by the Great Powers and Turkey, provided for a loan to the amount of nine million sterling to be guaranteed by the Powers. The German Government at once put forward the point of view that the Convention could be carried into force only after ratification by each Parliament.

## IV. 133

PRINCE BISMARCK TO LORD SALISBURY, *July 8th*, 1885

I had the honour to receive your kind note and the friendly messages you sent me through Baron Plessen. It was a great

pleasure to me to see by your own words that our former personal intercourse, which I am glad to renew, has left with either of us the same sympathetic recollection.

As to politics, I have not the slightest doubt that the traditional friendly relations between the two dynasties as well as between the two nations will give sufficient security for settling every existing or arising question in a conciliatory way. . . .

I hope to be able to comply somehow or other with your wish concerning the bringing out of the Egyptian Loan.

You may rest assured that I shall do my best to promote any arrangement that may be satisfactory to you. . . . I refrained from submitting a Bill on the subject during the last weeks before the recess of Parliament, because the chances of acception (*sic*) then appeared doubtful and still are not secure. But as far as can be done without encroaching on Parliamentary rights I am prepared to meet your wishes, either by ratifying under reservation or by not opposing any expedient that may suit your purpose without implying our direct participation.

In the Afghan question it is gratifying to me to believe in the peaceful dispositions of both Governments; for a war between Russia and England, to both of whom we are united by ties of kindred and friendship, would be a political danger and an immense calamity for the material interests of Europe.

#### IV. 134

COUNT WILLIAM BISMARCK, LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*August 19th, 1885*

#### *Extract.*

I fastened on Lord Randolph Churchill's recently expressed desire for our support against Russia and explained our position according to my instructions, without mentioning that I had such instructions. I told him that our Government, and especially you personally, felt much sympathy for England and that our policy of late years had expressed this, apart from the misunderstandings on colonial matters last year. . . .

But we could not on that account sacrifice our good relations with Russia. The extent of our Eastern frontier made it impossible for us to risk using half our Army in defending it, whilst we might be at war with the French. We might face this possibility with more confidence, if there were any guarantee for the friendship of England. Churchill himself had informed me that the present Cabinet might be defeated at the next Election, so that we might find ourselves in three months' time face to face with a completely changed attitude on the part of England, with the result that we should have lost the friendship of Russia, and not gained that of England.

Churchill admitted that this danger existed, but not as threateningly as I had described it. . . . A change of Cabinet after the Elections might easily happen, and be not a bad thing for the Conservative Party, for it would be more comfortable in opposition than in power. But the Cabinet would not be a Radical one, but a moderate Liberal one or a Coalition, and that would be friendly to Germany. . . .

To my objection that however small the majority of the Party in power might be, it must be there, or the Government would cease to live, and that this majority would be the deciding factor, he replied that an anti-German policy would never have all the Liberals behind it. We should therefore always be safe, if the Conservatives stood definitely for friendship, or even alliance with Germany. I expressed our thanks for the support at Zanzibar, and congratulated him on the notion of acting in combination with the Sultan in Egypt. I showed him that this had ever been the right course in your opinion. . . . Churchill thanked me, but said that Egypt was not of so much interest to him. But Russian and French intrigues were to be feared in Constantinople, and German support was especially welcome there. England's chief danger was in Asia, and there not only in Afghanistan, but in Persia also. England's inability to give material support to Persia made the Russian machinations more serious there than in Afghanistan and 'moral' support was of no great value. He would like to see the integrity of Persia guaranteed by England and Germany jointly, and the whole settlement in Persia, as for instance, the construction (Ausbau) of the railways, in German hands. I replied that the Emperor of Russia would regard such an arrangement as a spear-point directed against Russia, and that the arguments that I first put forward applied to this subject also. Churchill turned to the map and showed me the Russian claims, and the value to Russia of the Zulficar Pass, since the command of it would allow the two attacking columns, which would march against Afghanistan through the two great river-valleys, to work in conjunction with each other. Herat was the key of India, where indeed it was universally regarded as such.

He, Churchill, would not hesitate (anstehn) a moment in declaring war about Herat, and is sure that the Russians would be utterly defeated. The Russians could do not harm to England; whereas England could find objectives at Vladivostock and in the Black Sea (BISMARCK: '/'), and the Turkomans could easily be caused to revolt. A war would do a good turn to England, even though the majority of the people were not inclined for war.

I said I hoped that war would be avoided, just as we had

avoided for fifteen years the danger of a war with France. War between England and Russia would be a calamity for us, as we wished to remain friendly with both Powers. . . .

[In November, 1885, Count Munster was transferred to Paris, and was replaced in London by Count von Hatzfeldt.]

#### IV. 136-7

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 9th, 1885*

To-day Lord Salisbury received me at the Foreign Office and went into the Bulgarian question with me.

At the close of our conversation he repeatedly assured me of his great desire to increase the intimacy of our mutual relations and of his readiness to support my efforts in this direction. But it should be borne in mind that we live here in a parliamentary country and also that in foreign politics the Government was unfortunately forced to consider public opinion in a thousand directions. He remarked: 'Vous comprenez que dans la question bulgare nous ne pouvons pas nous donner l'apparence d'être entièrement à la remorque de la Russie,—pas même à la remorque des trois Empires.'

On the whole, my general impression from the conversation is that Lord Salisbury desires peace and wishes to be on a good footing with us, but that the question of Bulgaria, of whose possible repercussions he is fully aware, interests him for the moment far less than the Elections, on which his remaining in power depends. (BISMARCK: '*Naturally.*'). Public opinion, he is convinced, will not stand any intervention in Eastern Roumelia, for it believes in a national revival there, and the acquiescence of England in any measure, that could be described as suppression, would work to the disadvantage of himself and his party. This consideration will probably influence his attitude in every case that may arise for the present and till after the result of the Election.

#### IV. 137-8

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT RANTZAU, *November 13th, 1885*

##### *Extract.*

The Chancellor requests that Count Hatzfeldt be answered as follows. We perfectly understand Lord Salisbury's situation, as described at the end of his Report, and that at present he must naturally consider British public opinion in framing his policy. We wish him all success, but must direct our policy in the first place towards assuring the German Empire against wars and coalitions. This involves the careful maintenance of



our relations with Austria and Russia and the prevention of a breach between these two Powers. . . .

Count Hatzfeldt should tell Lord Salisbury . . . that we do not believe that the future development of Turkey will prove threatening or unbearable to Austria, whatever form it may assume. The Imperial Chancellor believes, on the contrary, that an understanding between Russia and Austria regarding the future of Turkey and even Constantinople should not present difficulties. Indeed, a break between the two Imperial Powers would be for us a serious embarrassment, which we should struggle to avoid under all circumstances.

[Later correspondence will show that Prince Bismarck strongly resented any interference by England in Bulgaria.]

#### IV. 138-40

COUNT HATZFELDT TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
*December 5th, 1885*

##### *Extract.*

I was especially struck by my interview with Randolph Churchill, because, of all those whom I have seen, he alone sees into the future, possesses genuine ideas, correct or incorrect, and seems to pursue a settled policy. As you know, he desires an Alliance with Germany, and regrets heartily that it has not come to pass. Referring to the correspondence between the Chancellor and Lord Salisbury (July 2nd and 8th, 1885) as having been inspired by himself with this aim in view, he said: 'A nous deux (BISMARCK: '*Not strong enough.*') nous pourrions gouverner le monde. Mais vous n'avez pas voulu.' (BISMARCK: '?') I tried to make him understand that no German statesman could blindly incur the risk of drawing on Germany the enmity of Russia or an attack by France. Our position was quite different from England's, and he must bear that in mind. Moreover, the British Parliamentary Institutions and the uncertainty which they caused were powerless to offer a sufficient guarantee that an engagement entered into by the Government here would be respected and fulfilled by its successor. . . . Churchill replied with feeling that this very alliance with Germany, which would have been a tremendous achievement by the Conservative Government, would have assured it for years to come (BISMARCK: '?') and made Gladstone an impossibility. This lasting success of the Conservative Party would have given us the guarantee which we required.

To-day it was otherwise. Instead of success in founding an alliance with us, the Conservative Government was obliged to note that we had closed the Dardanelles against England, instead of opening them, and this miscarriage was bound to injure the Government.

As regards Roumelia R. Churchill does not entirely see eye to eye with Lord Salisbury, for in his opinion Salisbury has gone too far *en avant* in the question. Churchill really is thinking of India and goes on the assumption that England still requires two years more to become unassailable there. (He particularly requested me to make no use of this information.) For this reason he thinks that any conflict with Russia in the Balkans should be avoided and that this should be easy, as England possesses no actual interests there and she could without anxiety leave Austria in charge of any she has there against Russia. Austria would have in the end to undertake this, whether she would or no. . . .

Then, in reference to the British insistence on respect for national aspirations, he continued: 'Lord Salisbury said to me lately, that, if Turkey really advanced into Eastern Roumelia, England would naturally be obliged to adhere to her own policy and insist on her advisory rights, but would naturally not put up a single man to prevent it.'

He has already exercised, and not, I think, unsuccessfully, these advisory rights, when he brought pressure on Rustem Pacha (Turkish Ambassador in London) to prevent the shedding of blood in Eastern Roumelia. From some not very distinct utterances of the Turkish Ambassador's, I gather that it has again been suggested to him that the best way to arrive at an understanding would be by direct negotiations between the Porte and Prince Alexander (of Bulgaria).

So long as I lack instructions to the contrary, I shall continue to urge Lord Salisbury to work in conjunction with the rest of the Powers, giving some formula or other as his reason. This, I think, is to our interest. Not only is England a useful counterweight, and her presence at the green table would make one-sided and possibly awkward decisions impossible, but—and this to me is the most important—she will be forced to realise what her interests really consist of, and to give up the notion of thrusting Austria forward,—as Churchill openly says and Salisbury thinks,—and so forcing her into antagonism with Russia.

I have been able to ascertain as a fact that in Russian circles the feeling in favour of Prince Alexander has changed. The Staff of the Russian Embassy speak of it pretty openly.

#### IV. 140

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *December 9th*, 1885

I do not understand Lord Randolph Churchill's reference to an alliance with Germany. No offer which I could have refused was ever made to me. The correspondence between Lord

Salisbury and myself was limited to a single letter on each side. . . . In mine there was not the slightest mention of a refusal. I cannot accept Churchill's remark :—' *A nous deux nous pourrions gouverner le monde.*' 'A nous deux' we are not strong enough, but should need a third Power, which might well be Austria. British policy has either failed or refused to understand this and has thoughtlessly estranged Austria. Churchill's final words—' *mais vous n'avez pas voulu*'—are a pure invention, for the question of an alliance was never raised. If you discuss this question with Lord Randolph Churchill again, you will do well to explain his error to him and tell him that the conclusion of a lasting alliance with England would necessitate an Act of Parliament, to which the British Parliament would not be likely to agree. Otherwise only an alliance between Cabinets would be achieved, with the result that we should merely be forced to act as leaders of the team, as long as we were needed. An alliance cannot be made in this way, by proclaiming more or less that one is ready to go through thick and thin with the other party. It can only be genuine when the policy of both parties is pursued in common, and particularly with a country whose foreign policy depends on changes of Government. Otherwise the notion of making a proclamation is no more than a castle in the air.

We could not enter into an alliance without risking an immediate break with Russia and Austria; this would inevitably entail the hostility of France. England appears to assume that in face of such a coalition Germany would play some such part as Churchill now assigns Austria, namely to play England's game at Austria's own expense.

The suggestion about Austria which Churchill put to you was really childish, and I cannot imagine that the British Government actually thinks that Austria would be so mad as to ruin herself for the sake of England. . . . If England had encouraged Austria with energy and trust to pursue a joint policy with herself, namely in protecting Constantinople against the Russians, Austria would probably also have preferred to assure her own interests in alliance with England rather than with Russia. I consider England's choice of policy—making a cat's-paw of Austria, and then, after a change of Ministry, copying Gladstone's programme to some extent and leaving Austria in the lurch by coming to an understanding with Russia—as clumsy trickery, and I will have nothing to do with it. . . .

Lord Randolph Churchill is quite wrong if he is thinking that the newly enfranchised country voters take any interest in foreign policy. He also forgets that the Liberals were in power last year, when the dispute between England and Russia threatened

to become acute, and the question of closing the Straits was under discussion. If in Mr. Gladstone's time we had chosen to encourage the Sultan to break the Dardanelles Treaties, we should have broken with Russia, and should have won to our side neither the Conservatives, who were then not in power in England, nor the new Communist-Radical electoral classes. These electors are probably ignorant who or what (wer) the Dardanelles are. Austria is not strong enough to undertake alone to protect Constantinople against Russia, and we have no interest in the question, as long as Russia refrains from attacking Austria. Thus there is no alternative for Austria but to come to an understanding with Russia, so long as she cannot count on an alliance with England in her resistance, as in the Crimean War. If Austria designs to fight except in self-defence, she will, I say it in confidence, not receive support from us ; but she could justly claim that of England, were she fighting in defence of interests which are at the same time those of England.

[The contents of Count Hatzfeldt's despatch of December 5th, 1885, were promptly transmitted to the German Ambassador in Vienna.]

#### IV. 263

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
*December 7th, 1885*

*Secret.*

Count Hatzfeldt's confidential despatch leaves no doubt of the fact that the British Ministers have assumed as an axiom that they need not look after British interests in the East, since Austria will and must fight for them by herself. The Imperial Chancellor is of opinion that the Austrian Government's ill-considered and over-hasty readiness to re-open the question and draw upon itself the enmity of Russia, is giving the British Government full reason to assume that Austria will take action unsupported. In such an event England would allow Austria to wear herself out and then proceed to follow Gladstone's programme and come to an understanding with Russia at Austria's expense.

[The Count then repeated almost word for word the opinions and prognostications expressed by Lord Randolph Churchill respecting Russia, Austria, Eastern Roumelia and India. With regard to the last, he wrote :]

Perhaps Russia requires less than two years to enable her to attack ; but if Austrian policy lacked the nerve to wait for this, the Chancellor declared that he would give Austria no help.

Prince Bismarck requests you to speak very confidentially to Count Kalnoky in this sense and to be especially discreet

(sekretieren) as regards any reference to the occupation of Constantinople in some form by the Russians.

IV. 264

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*December 9th, 1885*

*Extract.*

Count Kalnoky said that Austria would take good care not to quarrel with Russia now over the question of Eastern Roumelia and would therefore not resist any advance by the Turks into that district.

On this I said to him that with this knowledge he need only have patience and refrain from playing England's game by any hasty action. England was heading towards war with Russia. Some time was sure to elapse before this happened. Austria must await it quietly since, by the time that Russia and England were at war, Austria would easily find out where her interests lay.

Count Kalnoky admitted the correctness of my arguments and promised that he would not be put upon by England. (BISMARCK: '*But he is.*') I answered that, if he continued attracting Russia's enmity, he would still be playing England's game. I knew for certain that feeling in St. Petersburg was growing more and more irritated against Austria, and he would have to reckon with that. . . .

## CHAPTER XV

### ZANZIBAR AND SAMOA, 1886-7

#### THE CLOSING OF THE PORT OF BATOUM

##### *German Note.*

After a short period of power Lord Salisbury's Ministry made way once again for a Cabinet under Gladstone's leadership, in which Lord Rosebery became Foreign Secretary, and Lord Granville Colonial Secretary.

In the late autumn of 1885 the task of settling the disputed frontier of the Sultan of Zanzibar was entrusted to a Commission, the British Representative being Lieutenant-Colonel Kitchener, the German Dr. Schmidt, and the French the Consul-General, M. Patrimonio.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. 143

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, BERLIN, TO COUNT HATZFELDT,  
*March 19th, 1886*

We believe that we are correctly informed that in this affair of Zanzibar, just as formerly in Samoa, . . . the British officials abroad consider it their duty to sow suspicion of us in the minds of the native rulers of the uncivilised territories overseas and to put hindrances in the way of our colonial aspirations.

Considering the repeated assurances of friendship both by Lord Salisbury's Ministry and again just lately by Lord Rosebery, we cannot imagine that this attitude corresponds with the intentions of the London Foreign Office, or is the result of instructions forwarded by the Colonial Office to British Agents overseas.

The vastness of England's Colonial possessions in all parts of the world makes it hard to understand her readiness to show mistrust and ill-will to the comparatively modest beginnings of colonisation by her kinsmen, the German people, to the extent of obstructing all our enterprises there. If it were but the fears regarding trade competition here in Germany, we should leave

<sup>1</sup> For the origin of the Zanzibar affair, cf. A. Zimmermann's *History of German Colonial Policy* (1914), p. 113 seq.; Sir G. Arthur's *Life of Lord Kitchener*, I, p. 140 seq.; and Lord Granville's 'Life', II, p. 369. Also for the Samoan affair, cf. Zimmermann, p. 288 seq. For the history of Zanzibar, see *East Africa, British*, edited by F. Holderness Gale, p. 25 seq. Also Sir Charles Eliot's *East African Protectorate*, p. 25 seq.

it to those concerned to escape from the strangle-hold as best they could and to fight with (befehden) the ordinary weapons of everyday business life. But the position of affairs is altered, when we see that the official representatives of England are promoting an anti-German agitation and attempting to sow contempt and suspicion of the objects of Germany and her nationals amongst semi-barbarian peoples. We have obtained first-hand evidence of this in Zanzibar, and Consul Powell appears to desire to act in a like manner in Samoa. The constantly recurring friction between British and German Consular officials has an undesirable influence on the general relations between Germany and England in those parts, and we are in danger, like the Montagues and Capulets, of seeing freshly settled disputes revived owing to the continued quarrels of our subordinates.

I will ask you to make use of this classical instance with Lord Rosebery, who has a fondness for quotations.

We have hitherto been most conciliatory towards England in disputes of this kind which have assumed a personal character. For instance we recalled Rohlfs (German Consul-General at Zanzibar, recalled early in June, 1885) from Zanzibar, because we expected that his successor (Herr Travers) would get on better with the Sultan and the British Representative, and we should now be prepared to make a similar concession in Samoa. We thought we might hope that England, in return, would make an alteration likewise in the personnel of her Mission under analogous circumstances. One-sided concessions by Germany alone would otherwise be a useless sacrifice and a discouragement for our representative, whilst the fact of the British officials remaining at their posts would necessarily appear as a victory over their German rivals and would strengthen and encourage them in the anti-German attitude they have taken up. Friction in the Colonies may be apt to lead finally to a general rivalry in politics, and England would find a heavy account against her, if she had to pay in Egypt and the East the debts incurred by her officials in Zanzibar and Apia.

[Prince Bismarck at this time was pressing the Foreign Office for the answer to a question which, as in the case of the Angra Pequena dispute, could not be replied to without previous reference to the Colonial Office.]

#### IV. 144

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *April 2nd, 1886*

Your Report of March 29th informs me that in spite of your repeated applications, Lord Rosebery is unable to declare whether

which include the acquisitions made under treaty by the German East African Company.

As has been shown in my earlier despatches, we put this question with the friendly intention of ascertaining, before extending the German sphere of influence in East Africa, that we should not come into conflict with existing British rights there. We relied on this proof of our consideration and of our confidence in the good faith of the British Government and hoped for an early and definite reply, since it required no lengthy inquiry in order to ascertain whether England has acquired sovereign rights over the Somali Coast or not. We now see that as in the affair of Angra Pequena, two years ago,<sup>1</sup> there is an attempt to evade a definite answer, and we are obliged to agree with you in assuming that there is the intention to put us off, in order in the meantime to produce a *fait accompli* on the Somali Coast and so anticipate the proclamation of a German Protectorate, which is feared.

The thrusting forward of the Colonial Office, whose permission must apparently be waited for, recalls the behaviour of the Gladstone Ministry during the whole of 1884, when our inquiries into the existence of British claims only encouraged British competition in making yet more extensive seizures of territory. I am far from thinking that Lord Rosebery is following this example intentionally or is allowing himself to be led by the Colonial Office on questions, which may effect our general relations towards England. But I beg you in all cases to make it quite plain to the British Minister that we desire to maintain priority of claim for Germany on the Somali coast, as laid down in the Treaties of the German East African Company of September 6th and November 26th, 1885, and that we should view any attempt after this time to seize territory or establish sovereign claims as an attack on rights already secured by Germany.

#### IV. 145

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *April 21st, 1886*

I enclose to you a copy of a Report by the Imperial Consul-General at Zanzibar dated April (?) 13th, from which you will observe how unprofitably and, from our point of view, unfavourably, the work of the Boundary Commission is being conducted. According to other detailed Reports by the Consul-General and Consul Schmidt, which were despatched at the same time, it is clear that the British Agents in Zanzibar, if they are not apparently acting in direct opposition to the instructions of their



it to those concerned to escape from the strangle-hold as best they could and to fight with (befehden) the ordinary weapons of everyday business life. But the position of affairs is altered, when we see that the official representatives of England are promoting an anti-German agitation and attempting to sow contempt and suspicion of the objects of Germany and her nationals amongst semi-barbarian peoples. We have obtained first-hand evidence of this in Zanzibar, and Consul Powell appears to desire to act in a like manner in Samoa. The constantly recurring friction between British and German Consular officials has an undesirable influence on the general relations between Germany and England in those parts, and we are in danger, like the Montagues and Capulets, of seeing freshly settled disputes revived owing to the continued quarrels of our subordinates.

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Government, which according to Sir Edward Malet, were friendly towards Germany, are using underhand means to run contrary to our interests and to set the natives against us. As you are aware, for some time past we have had reason to complain of Sir John Kirk (British Consul-General in Zanzibar) and to watch his activities with suspicion. The instructions, sent to him by Lord Salisbury, did produce an alteration in his behaviour for a certain period, but lately he seems, in combination with Colonel Kitchener, to have moved the Sultan to adopt an attitude towards the Commission, such as to make its work illusory and, in the words of our own Agents, degrade it to the level of a farce. We had hoped that the British Government, acting in accordance with its repeated assurances of friendliness, was appointing Kitchener, as a man likely to meet our wishes in a conciliatory spirit and to join with our Representative in countering the somewhat unfriendly methods of the French Commissioner. As you are aware, the exact opposite has been the case, and in answer to our complaints expressed not long ago in Paris and London at the same time, the French Government alone at once declared, in a manner deserving of our gratitude, its willingness to replace M. Raffray on the Commission by some official more acceptable to us. . . .

The work of the Boundary Commission has, meanwhile, been postponed pending the arrival of the new French member, M. Le Maire. Our Agents' reports give me the impression that owing to the deep-seated and considered antagonism of Herr Kitchener to German interests, since he has actually prevented an Indian from taking part, for fear that an objective decision might so be obtained, any resumption of negotiations will be barren of result. Up to the present Kitchener has opposed us on every occasion and will doubtless do his utmost to influence M. Le Maire in our disfavour. We cannot accept a situation in which our Representative will be from the beginning in a hopeless minority; if the British Government refuses to authorise a change, we shall be forced to retire from the Commission and take into our own hands our own arrangements on the East Coast of Afsira.

*German Note.*

As a matter of fact the new French Commissioner was repeatedly instructed by his Government to support the German point of view as far as possible. The resumed negotiations, however, pursued the same uneasy course as before, and at the end of May the German Government caused the Commission to be dissolved, with the intention of submitting the disputed points for friendly discussion with the Cabinets in London and Paris and thus achieving a settlement.

## IV. 147

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 22nd*, 1886  
*Extract.*

. . . Lord Rosebery listened to me carefully and answered that, as I knew, his point of view was that the Germans could only be welcomed as neighbours of English colonies, whereas this was not the case with other nations. Your Highness, moreover, knew this, as he (Lord Rosebery) had been the first to prepare an understanding with Germany on colonial matters.

With regard to Zanzibar . . . Lord Rosebery recommended that not too much attention be paid to the reports of the rival Agents of both parties on individual points which could scarcely be controlled from home. He assured me that Sir John Kirk, in his reports to London, always showed much appreciation for Germany; whereas he (Lord Rosebery) had already telegraphed instructions to Major (*sic*) Kitchener, who for some time past had certainly yielded to the influence of his French colleague, to cease giving cause for justifiable complaints as to his attitude. He could not yet expect the reply to his despatch, but he felt assured that his warning would bear fruit in the required direction. . . .

I replied to the Minister that the individual actions, which had led to differences between our Agents at Zanzibar, were perhaps hard to judge and control here, but that all our Reports presented a clear and unpleasing picture and showed that the British Agents are prejudicing the Sultan, as also some of the chiefs, especially the Arabs, against us, and are trying to thwart us everywhere. The whole situation demanded the mutual assistance and co-operation of both Governments at Zanzibar. This alone had prevented distressing complications and could bring about a happy solution. . . .

Lord Rosebery agreed that this must be stopped and at the close of the conversation empowered me to inform you that he would instruct Sir John Kirk by telegraph to abstain from all action directed against Germany and to maintain as far as he could a good understanding with his German colleague.

(PRINCE BISMARCK: '*Empty words! Perhaps the latest reports from Zanzibar cannot have reached London on the 22nd?*')

## IV. 148

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 2nd*, 1886  
*Very confidential.*

I consider particularly worth mentioning a remark of Lord Rosebery's, which I think indicative of the present British Government's point of view. The question arose in conversation

whether, supposing England found herself involved in differences with another Great Power—France or Russia—she would not painfully feel the lack of an alliance. Lord Rosebery said: ‘Il est cependant bien possible que Vous trouverez alors qu’il est de Votre propre intérêt de nous soutenir et dans ce cas Vous nous soutiendrez.’ It is this same expectation that I have met with here several times, namely that Austria at one time and Germany at another will be called upon to pull England’s chestnuts out of the fire according to the need of the moment.

I must still adhere to my conviction that, in spite of Lord Rosebery’s undoubted good will, we have little to hope from the existing British Government, and that as long as it lasts, England would consider very coolly whether she would not reap the best advantage by leaving us to our fate in any serious conflict in which we might be engaged with another Power.

I think that matters would bear a different aspect, supposing that at the end of the present internal crisis in England the Conservative Party, led by Lord Salisbury, obtains a long term of power. This statesman, whose one desire is for the greatness of his country, and who recognises that this depends on her position abroad, would, if I am not mistaken, keep before him and pursue, in view of the serious foreign complications which the future will bring to England, the policy of seeking the steady and reliable support of Germany.

[In less than two months, at the end of July, 1886, a fresh Conservative Government came into power under Lord Salisbury, with Lord Iddesleigh as Foreign Secretary.]

*German Note,*

At the end of June, 1886, the Russians declared, in a Memorandum to the Powers who signed the Treaty of Berlin, their intention of closing the hitherto free Port of Batum.<sup>1</sup> This was carried out under an Imperial Ukase on July 17th.

V. 44

SCHWEINITZ, GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN ST. PETERSBURG TO THE  
GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 4th, 1886*

Count Kalnoky (Austria) expressed no anxiety at the Russian Memorandum regarding Batum and intends merely to notify the Emperor Francis Joseph of it. Count Robilant (Italy) took it more seriously and means to examine it. Freycinet (France) wishes to read through the documents first of all. Lord Rosebery thinks the contravention of an agreement which was based on mutual consent a serious matter, refers to the Protocol and intends to collect the opinions of the other Cabinets.

Giers reminded the representatives in London, Rome and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Staatsarchiv*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 38 seq.

Paris by telegraph that it was not a matter for inquiry, but for communication of an accomplished fact. He is preparing a despatch to de Staal, in which, after reiterating the well-known Russian arguments, he will say that Russia desires to observe the Berlin Treaty henceforward, but that this Treaty and the Protocol of the Powers has already been contravened in the Bulgarian question, just as other Treaties had been by England in Egypt and by Italy in the Red Sea.

Giers repeated incidentally that it depended on him to remove or heighten the embarrassment of the English at Choja-Saleh.

#### V. 45

THE KOMMISSARISCHER CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN VIENNA, COUNT VON WEDEL, TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *July 13th, 1886*

*Confidential.*

Count Kalnoky was so kind as to read me a telegram from Baron Hengelmüller, the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires in London, about a conversation held by the latter with Lord Rosebery concerning the Batum question.

Lord Rosebery had said that a Note had been addressed to St. Petersburg by the British Government on the subject, and that the Russian Cabinet had answered,<sup>1</sup> referring to the way in which the Treaties had been kept in Egypt and Massowah and expressing the Russian Government's astonishment at the reception accorded to the Batum decision in London. Further, the previous notification of the European Cabinets had been an act of courtesy on Russia's part, since the Tsar had a right to do whatever he pleased with Batum.

On reading this last passage aloud, Count Kalnoky remarked that he could not see that the Russian Government's point of view went so much too far.

According to what Lord Rosebery said to Baron Hengelmüller, he had spoken somewhat seriously to the Russian Ambassador, to the effect that if the Gladstone Cabinet fell now, the responsibility would lie with Russia's conduct in the Batum affair. 'Nous avons cherché d'avoir de bonnes relations avec la Russie, mais nous n'avons pas réussi.' With these words Lord Rosebery indicated to M. de Staal the extent to which Russia's action regarding Batum had affected the present British Government prejudicially.

[Lord Rosebery also appealed to the Protocol of the Black Sea Conference, of January, 1871, which forbade any alteration in its provisions without the consent of the Signatory Powers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Staatsarchiv*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 42 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Annual Register*, 1886, p. 366.

There is no evidence that the closing of Batum as a Free Port contributed seriously to the fall of the Liberal Government, which actually took place a few days after Lord Rosebery's despatch was written. The Irish Question, by itself, was the real issue which decided it.]

#### IV. 150

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *September 22nd, 1886*  
*Extract.*

The conversation turned on Zanzibar.

Lord Salisbury wished to hear my views as to the best way of settling this matter. I said that I considered the best method of arriving at a satisfactory settlement would be for England and Germany to come to a private understanding on the question as soon as might be. (BISMARCK: '*We must deal not in vague expressions, but in definite figures. We must formulate our demands (one port and so on) now and without further delay, whilst the Egyptian movement is still to the fore in France.*') Such an understanding could, as suggested by England, be confirmed officially later on in the course of the Conference.

Lord Salisbury entirely agreed with this and declared his intention of speaking to Lord Iddesleigh in the same sense.

#### IV. 150

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, OF THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 29th, 1886*

The Imperial Chancellor desires you to communicate to London the facts detailed in the Zanzibar Report No. 57 and to say in connexion with it that we have every inclination to be of service to England, wherever our interests do not clash not merely in the Egyptian question, but also in dealing with France our sympathies would be decidedly on the side of England, if British policy were more forthcoming in the Colonial questions of Zanzibar and Samoa, which are of more importance to us than to England, and if England would put a stop to the systematic intriguing of her officials to our disfavour. The ill-treatment that we have had to put up with from England in Colonial matters, drove us years ago to make a rapprochement with France.

This reversal of our otherwise natural and traditional policy in this way might have convinced the English how sensitive we are to the hostility of England in our Colonial policy. This sensitiveness is due to the state of parties in the Reichstag, and our anxiety concerning home politics might constrain us to tread undesired paths once again, if the direct intrigues and support of our rivals in individual Colonial question do not cease. We would willingly have sacrificed our good relations with the Dutch Boers, if need be, in order to be on good terms with England.

But if our advances continuously fail to meet with reciprocity on England's part, we should be forced to take up these and other points again. If the Sultan of Zanzibar continued his present contemptuous treatment of us, we should send a second and stronger expedition. And we should certainly not start a second time, without sufficient military force to win the position we desire and to punish the Sultan's impertinence. And we should do the same against King Malitoa in Samoa, if he did not cease to annoy us.

#### IV. 151

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, BERLIN,  
*October 2nd, 1886*

The British Ambassador visited me to-day, and I led the conversation on to our Colonial grievances and expressed myself in accordance with the latest instructions regarding Zanzibar, and with our political relationship towards England. I described to Sir Edward Malet the act of violence committed against Denhardt's employés by the Sultan of Zanzibar and mentioned our wish for British support in claiming compensation. The Ambassador said that he had not the slightest doubt that his government would be most ready to meet our wishes. In reference to my general observations he said that he rejoiced to be able to inform me that he had the very day before written a long report to Idlesleigh in complete agreement with my observations. . . . The Ambassador . . . asked me what we intended to demand in Zanzibar. I replied that we did not yet know the details of the East African Company's wishes, but that they would probably include an assurance of British support in inducing the Sultan to concede, perhaps in return for payment in some form, the right to use the port of Dar es Salaam and to collect customs dues, and also an agreement as to the eventual territorial ownership of Gazi. We intended to send Geheimrat Krauel at once to London with the idea of bringing the affairs of Zanzibar to a satisfactory conclusion.

Sir Edward was pleased by the foregoing communication, and said that Dr. Krauel would be welcomed in London, and that Zanzibar was the affair, not of the Colonial Office, but of the Foreign Office.

Sir Edward received my suggestions regarding the port favourably and said that he thought that this relatively moderate demand could raise no difficulties in London, as it would not weigh against the great interests affecting England in Egypt.

(Note by Prince Bismarck at the beginning of the above document: '*The British must be quick with their decisions, otherwise*



*forcible action by us against the Sultan will make an impression in Europe as of a demonstration against England.'*)

*German Note.*

The instructions handed to Dr. Krauel contained four points :

(1) Leasing to the German East Africa Company of the customs of Dar es Salaam, to be collected under Treaty, in return for a payment to the Sultan of Zanzibar ;

(2) Acquisition of the port of Gazi ;

(3) Definite delimitation of the frontier of the Sultanate of Witu, which is under German protection, against that of the Sultanate of Zanzibar ;

(4) Anglo-German agreement as to the mutual spheres of influence in the Kilimanjaro territory. In dealing with this point the German Delegate was especially recommended to treat the British interests in a conciliatory spirit.

#### IV. 153

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *October 14th, 1886*

Dr. Krauel will explain to you the instructions, which I have written for his guidance in dealing with Zanzibar. You will gather the essence of our demands from them, and I hope that your influence will succeed, not only in winning the British Government's assent to our wishes, but also in getting them formally recognised.

England will count on a friendly attitude of German policy against the efforts of France to make England's position in Egypt difficult and to obtain the support of other Powers. We shall be ready to meet this expectation. German public opinion will, however, only continue to support us in this if practical reciprocity on the part of England is clearly evident. We are ready to exercise our friendship, not only as regards the maintenance of England's dominant position in Egypt, but also in all questions in which England may come into collision with France, if only England will in a friendly spirit lighten for us overseas the tasks that we have set before us for the establishment (*Erschliessung*) of Colonial possessions.

This concerns Zanzibar and Samoa only. We wish to maintain good relations with the Sultan of Zanzibar and to diminish neither the financial basis of his existence nor the extent of his territorial authority, where we have recognised it. On the contrary we wish to be friendly with the Sultan and join with him in defending his established authority on the East coast of Africa. To this end we need the assurance that England will not only not stand in the way, but actually hold out the hand of friendship in the agreements which we may consider necessary to conclude with the Sultan. . . .

## IV. 154

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 19th, 1886**Cipher.*

In our first conversation to-day Lord Iddesleigh was extremely forthcoming and admitted repeatedly that a confidential understanding regarding Zanzibar was much to be desired.

It is my impression that outside the question of Egypt, an understanding is desired here with us on the Colonial question, if only we do not make too great demands. (BISMARCK: '*This fault of our colonial Jingoës, whose greed is greater than either we need or can satisfy, must be avoided with care.*') )

Lord Salisbury is expected here next week. If the conversations about Zanzibar still lead to differences of opinion, I will try to postpone the matter until his return.

COUNT HATZFELDT TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, *October 20th, 1886**Extract.*

The result of yesterday's discussion, which Krauel is reporting to-day, was, as far as I can judge, surprisingly satisfactory. If we obtain the ports in a form which frees us from the obligations of Congo Act, also roads of communication to our property inland, and thirdly, almost the whole of the two territories claimed by us, the only remaining question, as far as I can see, is whether these advantages are too dearly bought by allowing the Sultan 20 (German) miles in place of the 10 inland miles now conceded. If the answer to this question is 'no,' I earnestly request to be empowered to conclude the matter under the conditions mentioned above. It is impossible to gauge what alterations may creep in or how the wind may blow, and I think it would be a great advantage to have the question completely cleared up.

As regards the Samoan question, I am entirely in agreement with Krauel that we must make it our business to clothe the concessions demanded by us in a form, which will allow the British Government to satisfy us without getting into difficulties with Australia. (BISMARCK: '*Right.*') England's present relations with her Colonies contain dangerous pitfalls, and demand, in my opinion, the very greatest caution. The suggestions made to you by Krauel pay, as far as I can judge, the required attention to this point, and I recommend them for acceptance. If, however, any important differences should arise here out of them, greater than we can solve, it will still be possible to introduce certain modifications. . . .

*German Note.*

An agreement was finally reached between England and Germany on October 29th, 1886, on the delimitation of the Sultan of Zanzibar's territory, and of the interests of both Powers, by which a solution of the principal difficulties satisfactory to both Powers was reached. The Somalis alone were left out of the agreement. The text of the notes exchanged is given in Schultheiss' *Europäischer Geschichtskalender* for 1886, p. 155 seq. See also *East Africa*, edited by F. Holderness Gale, p. 30.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE NEAR EAST AND EGYPT, 1886-7

#### *German Note.*

On October 18th, 1886, Count Münster, now German Ambassador in Paris, reported that Lord Salisbury had held a confidential conversation at his residence near Dieppe with Count d'Aunay, French Consul-General in Cairo, which Count Münster regarded as an indication of a coming Anglo-French understanding on the question of Egypt. [This report prompted Prince Bismarck to issue the following orders to Count Hatzfeldt (October 22nd, 1886).]

'Count Hatzfeldt should, if he observes signs of an understanding between France and England regarding Egypt, refrain from opposing it or from awaking any suspicion that we take pleasure in driving the English and French at each other's throats. The renewal of an alliance of the Western Powers would not be at all undesirable to his Highness.

'His Highness adds confidentially for the records that an understanding with France might make England harder to deal with in our Colonial questions, but he would be quite glad to have something to set against the arrogance of Russia, which might become awkward.'

#### IV. 156

COUNT HATZFELDT TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, *October 26th*,  
1886

#### *Extract.*

Speaking of Egypt . . . I said plainly that we (Germany) should not stand in the way of any agreement between England and France, if it were thought desirable and possible in England, and we only wished to learn the British intentions, in order to avoid bringing on ourselves the displeasure of the French Government by too harsh an attitude of reserve, without doing any real service to England.

Randolph Churchill replied by showing me the draft of his letter written in Paris on October 19th to Iddesleigh, in which he described at length his conversation with d'Aunay, and begged me to read it under the seal of confidence. As I reported before, Churchill refused absolutely to accede to the French desire regarding a date for evacuating Egypt. Count d'Aunay was in a position to speak confidentially, as an old acquaintance of Churchill's, and he took advantage of this to represent in every way how important some sort of success on this question was

to Freycinet. At length, all being in vain, he fell to begging and repeatedly asserted that any date for evacuation, however distant, would satisfy Freycinet. Finally d'Aunay enquired whether Churchill would not care to see the Minister himself. This request also was refused.

After I had read the letter, Churchill repeated that he had no idea of making concessions to France. He had hitherto relied on our friendly assurances and would continue in confidence his policy of refusal in future. Lord Salisbury shared his opinion and would not leave him in the lurch. Lord Iddesleigh might possibly not have made up his mind to this extent and might have contemplated an understanding with France. In any case it would do no harm *d'amuser un peu les Français* and to content Lord Iddesleigh in this way, for it would not alter the facts in the least degree. Nothing could be done without him (Churchill), and he meant to stick to his guns.

An understanding with the Sultan regarding Egypt was quite a different matter, and he hoped that this would finally be concluded, even if it were troublesome and slow. Sir W. White, a man of undoubted ability, would conduct this negotiation, which, he hoped in strict confidence, would restore friendly relations between England and the Sultan and put an end to the Sultan's leaning towards Russia.

I answered Lord Randolph that, as I had often said before, our friendship could only be disturbed by a continuance of the difficulties on the Colonial side. . . . Thanks to his and Lord Salisbury's influence with Lord Iddesleigh the negotiations seemed to be going well and would, I hoped, soon be concluded.<sup>1</sup> I added that this good understanding could only bear fruits, if England consented to use her influence fully and loyally at Zanzibar for the acceptance of the Agreement by the Sultan. . . .

[Although the French Government realised that Prince Bismarck now intended to maintain an attitude of 'abstention bienveillante' in the affair of Egypt, it still hoped to induce him to bring pressure, as intermediary, upon England regarding the date of evacuation. To this end, on November 18th, 1886, Count Herbert, the French Ambassador, laid before Count Herbert Bismarck a copy of M. de Freycinet's instructions, which included the following points:

(1) First and foremost, a date for evacuation should be fixed by the British Government. It should itself propose that date as well as the moment (which we hope will be very soon) when it will be in a position to carry it into effect.

(2) During the period up to the effective evacuation the Egyptian Army should be reorganised. The cadres should be formed chiefly with the aid of Ottoman officers. Some European officers might be kept on provisionally.

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<sup>1</sup> The Agreement was concluded on November 1st.

(3) During the same period other reforms relating to the competence of the tribunals, the capitulations, the finances, the administration, etc., should be prepared for. Definite agreements between the Powers might even be concluded on these subjects, but the actual execution of them should not take place till after the evacuation. . . .

(4) After the evacuation there should be a period, as is apparently desired by England, of transition fixed by Europe, during which the British troops might, under certain defined conditions, re-enter Egypt, for the purpose of restoring order.

The following extract is taken from Count Bismarck's report:]

#### IV. 159

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, *November 18th, 1886*

##### *Extract.*

M. Herbette considered that particularly in Point 2, touching the officers, and in Point 3, dealing with the internal administration and the Capitulations great concessions were being offered to England; she, however, must not insist on their being put into force before the evacuation. If England remained immovable, it would in other words mean that she was refusing any understanding, even though France went as far as possible to meet her wishes. (BISMARCK: '/'). In connection with this the French Ambassador expressed his conviction that England would not continue to refuse the French proposals, if we would recommend them in London. . . . If Your Highness were inclined to take a hand and would present the great concession implied in Point 4 to English sensibilities in London in the correct light, the British Government might be glad to grasp the hand offered by France. M. Herbette added in confidence that he certainly thought that Europe would never allow a second occupation of Egypt by England, whenever the present one were definitely a thing of the past; but apart from this, England would hardly be prepared, once she had departed gracefully out of Egypt, for a repetition of the costly occupation, which had painfully exposed her to the attacks of other Powers. . . .

I should like to remark that in any mediation that we might undertake in London, it would seem to me a very difficult matter to press for a definite date for evacuation. (BISMARCK: '*Quite correct.*') This is the point on which the British Government is most sensitive, and after the forthcoming way in which Salisbury and Churchill lately met us in colonial matters, and considering the confidential exchange of ideas that these two statesmen have repeatedly had with Count Hatzfeldt only lately, they would probably feel injured and deceived, if we under cover of some kind of mediation between France and England went so

far as to ourselves suggest the settlement of a date for evacuation.

(Bismarck: '*Mediation can only be successful if England wishes it! We cannot support any French proposals in London, but we can support British ones in Paris.*')

#### IV. 161

MEMORANDUM DICTATED BY PRINCE BISMARCK, November 19th,  
1886

I wish the Memorandum of November 18th and enclosure to be confidentially communicated to Count Hatzfeldt. He should not bring it to Lord Iddesleigh's knowledge through the official channels, but confidentially to that of Lord Randolph Churchill, in order that the latter may see that the French do not wish to run up against the wall, but would rather come to an understanding. The German Ambassador should add in his communication to Lord Randolph, that I entertain no belief that England will consent to promise a definite date for evacuating Egypt, and that I have not the slightest intention to recommend acceptance of this or any other French proposal. But if England wishes us to act as postmen for an understanding between the two sea Powers, we are ready to do so. In my opinion there could be a compromise between England and France, not at the expense of England's position in Egypt, but by other concessions overseas, to be effected with the assistance of Germany; the possibility that Germany might support England in a struggle with France, or might take advantage of Russia's occupations and embarrassments in other parts of the world to attack France with the acquiescence of England, should have weight with France, even though no mention is made of these suggestions. Peace with Germany is of immense importance to France, in spite of all the talk about revenge.

In connection with this and with Count Hatzfeldt's private letter of November 16th, I wish added for his private information that I think it easier to mediate between France and England than between Russia and her rivals; firstly because the latter will not relinquish their rivalry and their hidden plans, and secondly because it will be hard to approach Russia on any count but that of the fear of complete isolation.

France will perhaps not find any acceptable equivalent in Tonkin, Madagascar, or Tunis alone—not even in Morocco—for renouncing her Egyptian rivalry, and I quite see that England cannot give way in Egypt. Russia's ability to attack Austria and Turkey, however, depends essentially on the assumption of French sympathy for Alliance. A grouping similar to that of the Crimean War would therefore probably make the situation less

strained. Any rapprochement between France and England would be a move in that direction, and I wish to learn whether Count Hatzfeldt thinks that this is possible. I see in it the only means of making Russia inclined to conciliation.

I wish the French Ambassador to be informed—but only, if he returns to the subject and demands a reply—that mediation can only take place at the desire of *both* parties. If we were convinced that not only France, but England also, desired mediation, without pressure on the other party, we would gladly undertake it, because of our strong desire to maintain peace between them, as also between Russia and Austria. Otherwise we should be forced to cling to our *abstention bienveillante de parti et d'autre*, which would not accord with the influence now asked for by France. Under such conditions the postman's activities would conduce towards peace in any case, for the third Party would be able to sound in confidence and save the two Principals from the awkwardness of receiving replies which could not be accepted.

#### V. 84

VON SCHWEINITZ, AMBASSADOR AT ST. PETERSBURG, TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 23rd, 1886*

##### *Extract.*

The view of (General Kaulbars) who, as the Petersburg *Wedomosti* recently said, prefers war against Austria to the occupation of Bulgaria, is shared here by many, and especially by officers of the General Staff. The expression which Herr von Giers . . . used to him: 'All our hatred is directed against Austria. Lord Salisbury, England and even Bulgaria will be forgotten,' is to the point. The ruling thought is now that they will not commit themselves beyond the Danube or take any risk in the Black Sea, but will avoid coming into touch with the Turkish Army and allay the suspicions of England, so as to be able to employ all their forces against Austria at the right moment.

#### IV. 163

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 24th, 1886*

When I had expressed myself in the sense of the Memorandum (Nov. 19th), Lord Randolph Churchill explained to me that his Egyptian policy was based on the principle of surrendering nothing to France, but of maintaining an understanding with the Powers and also, as far as possible, with the Porte, in accordance with our repeated advice to England. France had no right to make demands, as she had herself renounced it, and thus her position in Egypt was the same as that of any other Power. If



he could prevent it, a position of privilege in Egypt should never again be conceded to France.

He had decided on the policy of refusing all concessions to France and had brought his colleagues round to it, in the hope of our support. He had made a personal effort to lead British policy in the East in the direction of rapprochement with Austria as much as possible, which he thought ought to be in accordance with our wishes.<sup>1</sup> He was also at the same time using his influence to secure the fulfilment of our desires in the Colonial matters (Zanzibar and Samoa). He hoped thereby to have obtained our support and recognition in respect of Egypt, without which he would be unable to pursue his policy. He knew quite well, as he had repeatedly said to me, that any participation by Germany in France's schemes (BISMARCK: '*No prospect of this.*') would make England's position in Egypt practically impossible, and at the same time mean a serious defeat for the British Cabinet.

He had, however, no fear in connection with Egypt of Russia's rapprochement with France. (BISMARCK: '*It does not matter in what connection; it need not be Egypt. The moment we were at war with Russia, France would attack us; what may we expect from England then?*') Neither of them would make trouble in that matter, so long as France obtained no encouragement from us. He saw no possibility of placating France with concessions overseas and of drawing her away from Russia. The question of the New Hebrides and that of the Fisheries were too unimportant to be made use of with any success.

Lord Randolph said that so far he had no information as to the details of Lord Iddesleigh's negotiations with M. Waddington. Considering Lord Iddesleigh's pro-French leanings, he thinks it not unlikely that he may be led into using careless expressions, capable of interpretation in Paris as a readiness to give way, which would serve as an encouragement there. Therefore he greatly dislikes these negotiations. But he refrains from setting his veto on every concession favoured by Lord Iddesleigh in Cabinet, before which every question has to come, as he did in the matter of the Suez Canal.

The situation would be very different, if his colleagues became convinced that France, in her efforts to come to an understanding with England apart from every other Power, was receiving the slightest encouragement from us. This would strengthen the position of Lord Iddesleigh, who to-day is without influence, would discourage his, Churchill's, friends in the Cabinet and make him powerless for further resistance. He could not disguise the possibility that Lord Salisbury, who to-day was on his

<sup>1</sup> On the same day he complained to Count Hatzfeldt that Austria was leaving England in the lurch.

side, might lose courage and decide upon giving way to the French.

Throughout this conversation with Lord R. Churchill I persisted in explaining to him that our attitude on this matter in our dealings with France was one of friendship for England. (BISMARCK: '*Certainly.*') Your Highness would in no case favour any French proposal here and has left no doubt in the mind of the French Ambassador in Berlin. It is additional evidence of our friendliness for England that we are ready to communicate any British proposals in Paris.

When I parted from Lord Randolph, my impression was that he does not doubt the friendliness of your Highness' intention not to make difficulties for England in the Egyptian question. (BISMARCK: '*There he is right.*') He seemed to fear that on political grounds we might think an understanding between England and France desirable and from this point of view not be unwilling to hold the door open for such an understanding. More especially he is anxious lest the French should realise this and receive encouragement, not intended by us, to continue their efforts for a separate agreement with England.

I will accede to Lord Randolph's request not to mention in Lord Salisbury's presence as yet our conversation nor the contents of the Memorandum of November 19th, (BISMARCK: '*Good.*') unless I am differently instructed by your Highness.

*German Note.* IV. 276.

Ever since August, 1885, Sir Drummond Wolff had remained as Special Envoy for Egyptian Affairs in Constantinople and Cairo. His efforts, which had brought about an Anglo-Turkish Convention on October 24th, 1885, were constantly opposed by France. Von Radowitz reported on February 25th, 1886, that he had informed the British Representative that Germany was following the negotiations with interest and that she heartily desired to see England in a position to establish security and good government in Egypt.

IV. 165

PRINCE BISMARCK TO RADOWITZ, AMBASSADOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 2nd, 1887*

*Telegram.*

Report of February 25th received. I agree with it in principle, but could have wished that you had expressed even more decidedly to Sir Drummond Wolff our support for British aspirations in Egypt. We are deeply interested in Egypt financially, and we consider it essential that the measure of order, which British control has undoubtedly brought about, should remain constant. Apart from this, I am glad to possess a neutral field, on which we can cultivate the feeling with England, for, as was

communicated to you on February 17th, Russia's uncertain attitude obliges us to cling to this good feeling.

[This communication instructed Radowitz, in consideration of the 'uncertainty of the Russian attitude towards the threats of France, to adopt a more pro-English attitude', and till further notice 'in all disputes between England and Russia not, as has been done hitherto, to give active support to Russian policy, and to oppose the British even less, but to observe perfect restraint and neutrality'.]

## CHAPTER XVII

### ZANZIBAR AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN, 1887

#### THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION, 1887

#### IV. 165

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *March 26th*,  
1887

I see in your Report of March 23rd that on receipt of our despatch of February 18th you told the British Foreign Secretary of our complaints regarding Holmwood, the British Consul at Zanzibar. If by now you have received no reply to these detailed complaints, which are supported by documentary proof, it begins to appear that the British Government does not fully appreciate the consequences of the situation created by Consul Holmwood's anti-German attitude and uninterrupted intrigues in Zanzibar. The hope expressed in the Chancellor's despatch of the 18th that steps would be taken on the British side to stop any further incitement of the Sultan by the British Representative in Zanzibar, has so far not been fulfilled. As is shown by the Reports of Arendt, the Imperial Consul-General, which arrived by the last mail, and of which copies are enclosed, Consul Holmwood still revels in his rôle of an opponent of German policy in Zanzibar and appears to ignore the instructions which were, according to declarations made by the British Government, given to him regarding friendly co-operation with the German Representative. We see no justification for such lack of co-ordination between the agents abroad and the policy prescribed by the central office. If, in spite of every promise made by the British Government, the insubordination of the British Representatives in Zanzibar continues, and if Consul Holmwood, following in the footsteps of Sir John Kirk and Major (*sic*) Kitchener, continues, as third member of the gang, his destructive efforts and intrigues, we shall at last be obliged to think that higher influences than theirs are concerned in the game, and to act in a similar fashion by allowing our Representatives abroad to pursue an anti-British policy on suitable occasions. To start with it would concern Egypt and Constantinople. If we are

not very soon convinced by the reports of our agents in Zanzibar and Samoa that England is loyally supporting our efforts in those places, our representatives in the East will be instructed to cultivate an understanding with their French colleagues. . . .

I shall speak in this sense to the British Ambassador here, and I beg you to speak similarly to Lord Salisbury and to make it clear to him that the Chancellor regards this affair as serious. He will look on it as a slight, if substantiated complaints of this kind are not answered by the end of a month, and also if officials, against whom we have so many grounds for complaint, such as the present Consul Holmwood, who was formerly a subordinate clerk, sit sneering at their posts and persist in their anti-German attitude.

Consul Holmwood's action in the frontier dispute between Portugal and Zanzibar casts a curious light on the extent of his knowledge and fitness for his profession, in that in his despatch of February 13th the placing of Portuguese subjects in Zanzibar under German protection is represented as a proof that Germany is taking the side of Portugal, and the German Consul-General is challenged to defend the action. I beg you to remind Lord Salisbury that in July, 1870, for instance, at the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and France, the interests of French subjects in Prussia were placed under the protection of the British Embassy in Berlin, and neither we nor any other Power regarded that as a proof of partiality for France on the part of England. I hope that Lord Salisbury will set Mr. Holmwood right in this matter, so as to prevent his again misrepresenting the policy of Germany to the Sultan.

#### IV. 167

*The same to the same, March 26th, 1887*

*Confidential.*

Following my to-day's despatch regarding the behaviour of the British agents at Zanzibar, I am instructed by the Chancellor to beg you to indicate seriously to Lord Salisbury that His Highness will no longer put up with the British Agents overseas, whose attitude is not in tune with the assurances of their Government. In Zanzibar itself, the three Englishmen, Kirk, Kitchener and Holmwood, who, following the reputed instructions of their Government, ought to have cultivated friendly relations with us, have shown the most hostile behaviour to us. If Lord Salisbury refuses to make an example of them by breaking such Agents ruthlessly and repudiating them, we must assume that he puts our friendship at a lower value than we do. If England refuses to do us the kindness of meeting our claims in parts so unimportant to the power of England as Zanzibar and Samoa, we shall

shape our attitude in accordance with it and work against her in those parts, where her most important interests are at stake. Every few months in the last year we have been forced to use sharp language to England on Colonial matters. The exasperating part of it is that the cause is constantly repeated and that the British Government's intention to please us only lasts with her till our next friendly communication and never finds expression with her Agents at all.

The dilatoriness with which our complaints of the British Consul at Zanzibar have been treated, and the opportunity left to him to continue his intrigues with the Sultan against us are having a very bad effect here. This will soon—in the next few weeks—find expression. The Chancellor will commence the discussion of his wishes regarding Egypt with the French Ambassador, if the annoyance and irritation caused by the British do not immediately cease.

His Highness requests you to call Lord Salisbury's attention emphatically and confidentially to this situation in the manner you may consider best, and to inform him that we should be forced not only to pursue an anti-British policy in Egypt, but also to send similar instructions to Herr von Radowitz (in Constantinople), if Lord Salisbury continues to permit the pin-pricks of his colonial Agents.

I should say that so clear an indication of the possible change in our relations towards England would be sufficient to induce Lord Salisbury to reflect on the insubordination habitual to some of his officials and its consequences. If Lord Salisbury really sets more store on humouring a few Jingo New Zealanders and on keeping the former assistant clerk Holmwood at his post at Zanzibar, than on our friendship, we cannot change it, but we can take measures to meet it.

It would seem to me a very slight favour to us, if the British Government would consent to remove Consul Holmwood, who is continually disturbing our relations with the Sultan, and replace him by some one, who would not continually thwart us there.

We are unable to put up with dilatory replies any longer, and I beg you to relieve Lord Salisbury of any doubt, that our policy must be altered in a very short space of time, unless we can count on England's reciprocity on questions, which are of negligible importance to her in comparison with those of Egypt and the East.

## IV. 168-9

BARON VON PLESSEN, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 25th, 1887*

*Extract.*

Lord Salisbury repeated to me that the new appointment (of a Consul-General at Zanzibar) would take effect in one or, at latest, two months and added that he desired the delay in order to make the change in the way least painful to the officials concerned.

Colonel Euan Smith, who had acted as British Resident at various Courts in India, was intended to succeed Sir John Kirk.

He remarked further, in order to prevent misunderstandings, he wished to explain that Holmwood, who was now acting in the Consul-General's place, would after the change return to his former position and still be Commercial Consul in Zanzibar. In that character he would have no connection with the political side.

I replied that the Ambassador had expressly understood the agreement as meaning that, if we made a change in our representation there, Sir John Kirk and Holmwood would be removed from the British Mission in Zanzibar. . . .

Lord Salisbury, to whom I again spoke to-day in the foregoing sense, replied that he regretted the misunderstanding. When speaking to the Ambassador, he had had in mind a change of Head of the Consulate-General only. To remove Holmwood from Zanzibar would be an undeserved punishment, and he could not inflict it on him.

## IV. 169

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BARON PLESSEN, *April 27th, 1887*

*Telegram.*

If Lord Salisbury leaves Holmwood there, there is no reason for us to remove Arendt (the German Consul-General): and if England refuses to do us a favour in Zanzibar, our reason for doing likewise in Egypt or Constantinople falls to the ground. I shall instruct von Radowitz in this sense.

## IV. 170

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO BARON VON PLESSEN, *April 28th, 1887*

The Chancellor is much astonished at the sudden change in Lord Salisbury's intentions regarding the English representative at Zanzibar. Lord Salisbury's present offer is in no wise a concession, for Sir John Kirk, who has been away from Zanzibar for a long time now, would, as we were informed late last autumn, not

in any case be returning to Africa. Count Hatzfeldt's Reports as well as his last private letter, have said that Lord Salisbury promised Holmwood's removal. During his whole term of office this man has adopted a hostile attitude to us, and in particular has intrigued against Arendt, our Consul-General. If he remains at Zanzibar, it will be an indication of England's unfriendly intentions and of her attitude there for the future. We had hoped that the arrangements concluded last Autumn<sup>1</sup> would lead to the permanent support of our interests in Zanzibar. Under this conviction we continuously and successfully supported British policy in Egypt and Constantinople. If this assumption now proves ill-founded, all reasons now cease for us to render further services to British policy in the East.

When you say this to Lord Salisbury, please add that we are not offended at his changing his mind. We deal in practical politics according to the proverb, 'one hand washes the other', and if Holmwood's remaining at Zanzibar seems to Lord Salisbury more important than England's high political relations with Germany, we cannot help it.

We shall not be worse tempered towards England on this account, but shall shape our attitude in all questions that interest England, as I indicated in my despatch of March 26th. So far Herr von Radowitz is merely instructed to remain passive for the time and to cease his efforts at supporting his English colleagues and Sir Drummond Wolff. If, then, the British Government insists on refusing us the small favour of Holmwood's removal, we shall have no course but to instruct von Radowitz to throw his influence into the scales actively against England. . . .

#### IV. 171

BARON VON PLESSEN TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*April 28th, 1887*

*Telegram in cipher. Extract.*

I spoke to Lord Salisbury in the sense of your telegram of April 27th. He said that he could not take on himself the responsibility of *punishing* Holmwood by removing him from Zanzibar. His duties as Commercial Consul would place him entirely outside international affairs, and he would have nothing to do with Anglo-German relations in Zanzibar.

Then on my saying that, if England refused to show us favour in Zanzibar, there was no further reason for us to do likewise in Egypt or Constantinople, he replied that he could not answer offhand a communication of such importance, involving moreover a threat.

<sup>1</sup> The Agreement of November 1st, 1886.



Lord Salisbury's whole demeanour showed that he fully appreciated the seriousness of the situation.

IV. 172

PRINCE BISMARCK TO BARON VON PLESSEN, *April 29th, 1887*  
*Telegram.*

I cannot admit our communication contained any threat. Services between independent Powers rest upon reciprocity, especially those involving some sacrifice. Our help to British policy in Egypt lessens our chances of maintaining good relations with France. These would certainly be better with the present French Government at any rate, if we adopted an anti-British attitude. More weighty still is the undoubted fact that our support of British policy in Constantinople in the Egyptian question, as well as the withdrawal of the help formerly rendered by us there to Russia's policy, have tended to cool off and perhaps to endanger our relations towards Russia. This attitude of ours rests solely on the intention to please England, assuming that England will please us in Zanzibar and Samoa. We have no other motives. Germany is indifferent who rules in Egypt, and whether the Sultan inclines more to England or to Russia. If, in spite of this, we direct the influence of Germany in England's favour against France and against Russia, with no advantage to our own interests, in Egypt and Constantinople, I can only do so, when I can with full responsibility advise my Sovereign and country that Germany, in return for her services and their possibly unwished-for consequences, has received an equivalent in the form of favours in the Colonies, as for instance in Zanzibar and Samoa. If I could not point to such equivalents, all my friendship for England and Lord Salisbury would not justify me in renouncing any advantages for German policy, which would accrue to our relations towards France and Russia, from a different and at least impartial policy in the East.

In addition to the above I beg you to explain to Lord Salisbury that here we contemplate no threat, but merely the principle, that in foreign policy one is guided not by feelings, but by interest and reciprocity. Kindness without return only occurs in private life.

IV. 173

BARON VON PLESSEN TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*May 2nd, 1887*

*Cipher telegram.*

Lord Salisbury said, that he entirely agreed with the principles laid down by Your Highness in foreign policy, and recognises

that Germany's services to British policy in the East must rest on reciprocity. He considered that reciprocity had been shown in Samoa, which was given entirely over to German influence,—and also in Zanzibar. He did not think that Holmwood cherished the hostile feelings towards Germany that were attributed to him, and he could not sacrifice him.

Nevertheless he was prepared, in order to show a favour to your Highness, to remove Holmwood from Zanzibar and transfer him to another post. This would take place at the same time as the appointment of the new Consul-General in one to two months' time.

*German Note.*

In May, 1887, Count Herbert Bismarck visited England, in order to effect an understanding between England, Russia and Germany on the critical Bulgarian question. On the 25th of August he returned again to London, in order this time to forward the nearer understanding between England, Austria and Italy.<sup>1</sup> On both occasions he made every effort to settle up the last difficulties between Germany and England arising out of the colonial dispute. This was successfully achieved. On the question of Samoa as well as Zanzibar, there was, following Count Herbert's stay in London in August, 1887, a far-reaching measure of agreement between the two Governments. The Anglo-German Agreement of November 3rd, 1888, marks the coming together of England and Germany on the subjects of the unrest in East Africa in the summer of 1888 and of the slave-trade.<sup>2</sup> On December 14th Count Herbert made an enthusiastic speech in the Reichstag in the debate on Windhorst's Bill for the suppression of the African Slave-trade on the forthcoming attitude of England.<sup>3</sup> Herbert Bismarck expressed particular appreciation of Lord Salisbury in a private letter to Count Hatzfeldt (December 19th, 1888): 'Salisbury has truly shown great loyalty, and I was anxious that he should receive the praise of all his countrymen and opponents, who, and amongst them even his enemies, are accessible to the widespread influence of the Missionaries. I share your Excellency's conviction that Salisbury has gone as far as ever he could, and that we can claim no more from him. His high position and his retention of office is worth 100 times more to us than the whole of Africa. My father is exactly of that opinion.' Prince Bismarck, also, in a speech on January 26th, 1889, in the Reichstag, declared his unqualified adhesion to the policy of agreement and combined action with England in Colonial matters. . . .<sup>4</sup>

[The allusion to the United States in the following Memorandum, written in London, refers to the discussions on the Samoan Question. They had demanded the appointment of an Executive Committee for carrying on the business of Government, consisting of the King, one Samoan official and an adviser representing each of the Powers concerned, England, Germany and America.]

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ch. XXI, Memorandum of Aug. 24th, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the rest of the Correspondence on the East African Rising in the *Staatsarchiv*, Vol. L.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Schulthess, *Europäischer Geschichtskalender* for 1888, p. 196 seq.

<sup>4</sup> See *Die politischen Reden des Fürsten Bismarck*, ed. by H. Kohl, XII, p. 574 seq.

## IV. 175

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
*August 24th, 1887*

Lord Salisbury visited me yesterday afternoon at the Embassy, and the conversation turned first upon Samoa. I have been able repeatedly to ascertain that he attaches no value to Samoa, and that it is only out of consideration for the Australian Colonies that he may not declare this openly. The final solution, that he would prefer, would be for us to take Samoa, England the Tonga Islands, and the United States the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). He feared that the moment for this solution had not yet arrived, but that perhaps it might come in two or three years. The only course, meanwhile, was to fall in with the wishes of America and make an experiment with the three advisers. (BISMARCK: '*But not five; leaving out the savages.*') As time went on, there would be so many undesirable incidents as to convince even America of the impossibility of maintaining native Governments in the Pacific Ocean.

I said to Lord Salisbury that the Americans would have to be restrained in every possible way. They appeared now to interpret the Monroe Doctrine, as though the Pacific Ocean were to be treated as an American Lake; they wished to bring under their exclusive influence not only Hawaii (which was, as Salisbury said, of no interest whatever to England), but also Samoa and Tonga, as stages between the future Panama Canal and Australia. There were even dreamers in America who imagined an eventual Republican brotherhood and a linking up of the various Australian Colonies with the United States.

This suggestion caused Lord Salisbury to pause. He declared that we must keep a sharp eye on American fingers. I then mentioned Malitua (see despatch of September 28th, 1886),<sup>1</sup> and Lord Salisbury agreed upon assistance, or at any rate non-interference, by England in any dealings we undertook with Malitua. He thought that this would not greatly disturb the Australian Colonies, as we were willing to declare solemnly that there was no intention on our part to undertake any alteration of the present constitutional and commercial conditions in Samoa. The New Zealanders would not care which nigger chief dubbed himself King of Samoa, so long as politically all remained the same as before.

I thanked Lord Salisbury for his friendly words and informed him that our squadron would shortly deal with Malitua. I also expressed the hope that the British Government would continue to support us in Samoa as loyally as we had supported it in Egypt. Lord Salisbury replied with a hearty 'certainly', and merely

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 225.

added that he hoped we should not make war on Samoa. He was quite pleased when I said—'No, not against Malitoe personally, but we wish to see our interests insured against civil war and robbery'.

*German Note.*

At the end of September, 1887, Malitoe was deported by the German war-ship *Adler* and interned in New Guinea.

#### THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION, 1887

*German Note.*

On May 22nd, 1887, there was agreed between the British Special Envoy, Sir Drummond Wolff, and the Turkish delegates in Constantinople a Convention, which had been long under consideration. Article V of the Convention contemplated the withdrawal from Egypt of the British troops after a period of 3 years, but expressly reserved to England the right of re-entry into Egypt. Owing, however, to the opposition of France the Convention was not ratified.<sup>1</sup>

#### VI. 193

##### MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,

*June 8th, 1887*

When visiting me yesterday, the French Ambassador repeatedly referred to the Anglo-Turkish Convention and asked if we had taken up any attitude towards it. I replied that, as I had told him a week before, we had no inducement to hurry with the study of the whole subject, until the British Government should have communicated the text of the Convention to the Cabinet officially. As far as I knew, Lord Salisbury did not intend to do so until after ratification.

Our position in the matter was simple. We did not mean to make any difficulties for England in Egypt and should direct our policy on these lines.

M. Herbette at this, said the French Government followed the same thought. It had no wish at all *créer des embarras à l'Angleterre*. Notwithstanding the considerable French interests in Egypt, she had no ambition to claim any special position there. But France was bound to wish that no other Power should secure preferential treatment in Egypt, and her desire (BISMARCK: '*Not ours.*') was to see the Egyptian question settled on European soil.

I declared to the Ambassador that the aims and views of each of us as to the attitude to be adopted in this case, differed essentially. When I said that we did not mean to oppose England in Egypt, it meant that we should leave her to make her terms with the Sultan *et de régler la question égyptienne comme elle l'entend*.

M. Herbette showed signs of annoyance at my words. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Cromer's *Egypt of To-day*, II, p. 352.

## IV. 173

PRINCE WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*July 8th, 1887*

The following is an account of a conversation which I had with Lord Salisbury, in accordance with your instructions:

Remembering Your Highness' remark that, as British Statesmen were disinclined to talk politics to foreigners, I ought to let the Prime Minister begin, I refrained from addressing him direct. . . . The Prime Minister thanked Your Highness in warm terms for the assistance rendered by Germany in the settlement of the Egyptian Convention. . . . He then discussed the delays, which were to be expected on the part of the Porte, in finally completing the Convention. He indicated pretty directly that both France and Russia were intriguing with the Porte and were working in concert *sub rosa*.

I took then the opportunity of laying before him your Highness' expressed opinion that England should not allow the Porte to see how much importance England attached to the Convention. But if the Porte made too many difficulties, she could ride the high horse, hinting at the same time that Great Britain did not set so much store on the Convention, and that if the Porte did not agree for the moment, the British Government would let the matter drop. Thus everything would remain in statu quo. Lord Salisbury answered that he was delighted to hear this, as it was also his opinion, and it was most satisfactory to learn that Your Highness thought so too. It was yet another reason for acting on this principle.

Then Lord Salisbury turned to the Balkan Peninsula and affairs in Afghanistan and Russia. He said: 'We have some little difficulties there, which we hope soon to overcome without their giving us any serious trouble.'<sup>1</sup> As Your Highness had given me no indications on these points, I decided to offer no opinions on them, and the conversation soon came to an end. On leaving him, I received a decided impression that Lord Salisbury was relieved and really pleased.

The change in the attitude of the public since my last visit to England in 1880 is very remarkable, that is, a general dissatisfaction with present conditions. Even in 1880, when Gladstone came into power, if the conversation turned upon British institutions, I met with a certain haughty reserve, which covered their pride in their 600 years' old traditions, their Parliament, etc. Or a foreigner was given condescendingly, if not pityingly, to understand that he lacked these advantages at home, sad to say, but that it would be best for him to follow England's example as quickly as possible. One hears nothing of this now.

<sup>1</sup> English in text.

There is open abuse of Parliament, Free Trade and above all of Gladstone. The scenes in the Parliament Chamber showed what kind of a present the G.O.M. gave to the country with his democratic Reform Bill (of March, 1884), what elements had been returned and were having it all their own way in the House.

I twice saw the G.O.M. in the street. No one took any notice of him or saluted him, and the English gentleman, to whom I remarked on it, uttered a British oath. As a set-off to the many complaints I was struck with the uncritical admiration of Prussian-German institutions and conditions,—once so bitterly derided—which usually ended with the cry : ‘ Oh, I assure you, if we could have Prince Bismarck over here for a month, he would soon put everything to rights again.’

## CHAPTER XVIII

### NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA, 1886

[The despatch from Count Hatzfeldt, German Ambassador in London, written on December 5th, 1885,<sup>1</sup> seemed to indicate that England was intending to leave Austria to fight not only her own, but England's battles also, in Constantinople against Russia. A despatch<sup>2</sup> was promptly sent to Prince Henry VII of Reuss, Ambassador in Vienna, with instructions to warn Count Kalnoky of England's intentions, and to urge him to pursue a waiting policy.<sup>3</sup> Prince Reuss discreetly communicated the points to Count Kalnoky, who explained that Austria would certainly not quarrel with Russia about the East Rumanian question. His despatch continues as follows :—]

#### IV. 264

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*December 9th, 1885*

I told Count Kalnoky that with this knowledge he need only have patience and refrain from playing England's game by any hasty action. England was heading towards war with Russia. Some time was sure to elapse before this happened, and Austria must await it quietly, since, by the time that Russia and England were at war, Austria could easily find out where her interests lay.

Count Kalnoky admitted the correctness of my arguments and promised that he would not be put upon by England. (BISMARCK: '*But he is.*') I answered that, if he continued attracting Russia's enmity, he would still be playing England's game. I knew for certain that feeling in St. Petersburg was growing more and more irritated against Austria, and he would have to reckon with that. The Tsar, in spite of his power, might finally have to give way to public opinion, and all the more easily, as he was already beginning to show signs of annoyance. The excitement concerning the Khevenhüller Mission was officially, indeed, allayed, but the incident was not forgotten, I could assure him. Your Highness was doing your utmost to keep the Emperor Alexander in good humour; but his trouble would be wasted, unless Austria would consent to use more caution.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 216.

No more one-sided action, that was the main necessity. If it happened again, M. Giers, whose policy was based on the Entente of the three Empires, would be unable to remain longer in power. The Pan-slavists would gain the upper hand, and this was no more a matter of indifference for us than for Austria-Hungary. Count Kalnoky admitted the correctness of my remarks. . . .

*German Note.*

At the end of July, 1886, Lord Salisbury returned to power at the head of a Tory Cabinet.

IV. 265

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *August 13th*,  
1886

On my first visit to Lord Salisbury in his house since the change of Cabinet, he at once began a confidential exchange of ideas on the political situation in Europe, displaying the frankness, which he had shown me in our earlier relations.

The Prime Minister fully realised that the success of his Bulgarian policy of a few months before must have left a residue of dissatisfaction in Russia. He also recognised the indications that Russia is seeking an opportunity of regaining the ground she has lost in the East, and of strengthening and extending it.

The question follows whether the dangers to peace, arising out of this, are to be feared in the near future, and what means of forestalling them are offered by the European situation.

Lord Salisbury admitted that, from a military point of view, England could do but little by herself, in the event of serious complications in the East. He repeated several times, '*Nous sommes des poissons*,' meaning that England's weight in the world depended on her Fleet. In this connection he demonstrated that this was where Austria came in. It was in her power to undertake the part that England as a sea-power could not fulfil, and if diplomatic action were not sufficient for the maintenance of peace, she would be able to keep the Balkans quiet with her military forces, from whatever direction the trouble might come. He gave me to understand that a rapprochement and agreement between England and Austria upon a common attitude in these questions would be very desirable.

I reminded him . . . that he was assigning to Austria in the future the task of bearing the whole risk of a great war, without the certainty of any permanent security. I was naturally not in the position to judge of Austria's eventual decisions in the case put forward by him ; but I could not escape from the impression that, as things were to-day, Austria would first consult her own security and would ask herself whether she would do better by



exposing herself all alone to a great risk or by seeking some other arrangement for assuring peace and her own interests at the same time.

As regarded our own position, I reminded Lord Salisbury of our earlier confidential conversations on this subject and added my own personal impression that the dangers threatening us in the event of an European conflict had been greatly increased since that time, as he knew, by the development of affairs in France.

To this the Minister's reply was, 'Mais la France serait écrasée, si elle s'attaquait à vous.' Then, returning to his argument, he enunciated his theory that Austria had simply returned to her traditional Eastern policy. To my question whether this meant the maintenance of Turkey, he replied with an emphatic affirmative. On my remarking that it was England's traditional policy too, but that she had relinquished it years before, and pursued a contrary line, the Minister answered without hesitation that naturally England would have to return to her former policy. (BISMARCK: '*She would have to pay for the Turkish Army.*')

This led straight to the question of the part that Turkey was capable of playing. Lord Salisbury complained that the Sultan's personality made any understanding with him difficult, but he recognised the military efficiency displayed only lately by Turkey on the Thessalian frontier in the Spring.<sup>1</sup> This efficiency was only restricted by lack of funds. This point seemed to worry the Minister, inasmuch as he could see no means of helping the Sultan financially, owing to the state of affairs in England. (BISMARCK: ' ? ')

For the moment he considered Macedonia the danger-spot in the East, and showed that in every complication new dangers would threaten also from the side of Greece. These complications would even now cease, however, if Austria would co-operate and bring the weight of her diplomatic influence to bear. Austria's word carried great weight in Belgrade, Sofia, as well as Constantinople and Bukarest, and any decided action by the Austrian Government in those countries would suffice to keep those Governments quiet which were following their own devices, and would also keep at bay the foreign influences, which were making themselves felt in those countries.

He himself, continued Lord Salisbury, could count on any successful exercise of British policy only in Athens, (BISMARCK: ' / ' ) and he would not cease using his whole influence there in the interests of peace. In strict confidence he intimated that the Prince of Bulgaria no longer welcomed the British Government's advice as formerly. He, Lord Salisbury, was at a loss to account

<sup>1</sup> There was a threat of war between Turkey and Greece, when the Turks threw 20,000 men on to the frontier.

for this change. Nevertheless, he intended to use his influence there also in the direction of peace and moderation.

At the close of our confidential conversation Lord Salisbury referred to the possibility of a conflict with Russia in Asia. He laid stress on the fact that conditions had really altered there in the last two years, and that now he no longer feared that possibility. England had practically completed her preparations in India. He knew well that, if there were a collision there, it would take the form of a duel, and that England could reckon on no other Power in it. But England possessed the advantage of being able to conduct the struggle with all her resources at home and close at hand.

Lord Salisbury begged me on my taking leave of him to visit him again soon and to apply to him, whenever he could be of use to me. He expects, however, towards the end of the month to go again to Dieppe for a few weeks' holiday with his family, unless unforeseen events necessitate his remaining on the spot.

#### IV. 268

COUNT VON BERCHEM, FOREIGN OFFICE, BERLIN, TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *August 20th, 1886*

The Chancellor observed that if England has neither troops nor money, the question arises what she can do at all. If she desires support for her policy, she must herself take the risks, and not count on her chestnuts being picked out of the fire by others. Austria might support England, but not represent her. England, if she has no troops, would be forced to create them in the Turkish army with English money. In Turkey money could do anything, even create a fresh Sultan. But even if Turkey maintained a pro-British attitude, England on her side must do something to secure it. In former times England always subsidised those continental Powers, whose support she required, even Prussia. This policy would have to be applied to the Turkish Army, and then England's position in Turkey would be a strong one. It would be impossible for England to stand by with folded arms and send others into the fire for her. Constantinople was a matter of complete indifference to Germany, and even Austria might probably make her own arrangements, supposing Russia took Constantinople. . . .

#### IV. 269

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *September 20th, 1886*

In a chance conversation with me Lord Randolph Churchill (now Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of

Commons) seized the initiative for a confidential discussion of the political situation regarding the East.

I first made clear our point of view that German interests were not affected either in Bulgaria nor even in Constantinople, whereupon he enlarged upon his views regarding the policy to be followed by England, and enunciated certain definite principles, which he considers essential and which indicate his opinions clearly.

The first that he enunciated was that England is not a European, but an Asiatic Power, whose sole task it was to assure the possession of India for ever; hence England possesses no real interests in the Balkan Peninsula, and could allow Russia to do as she pleased there without anxiety. (BISMARCK: '*Comm.*')

A remark that escaped him seemed to me most significant of his influence over foreign policy. It was that he had expressed himself in the foregoing sense to the Russian Ambassador.

The second principle that he asserted was that, as things are now, it is impossible to separate foreign from internal policy. It was, above all, the task of the Conservative Government to secure a continuous lease of power so as to promote Conservative ideas in the country with success and to strengthen the monarchical Constitution. This task, which should correspond with our desires, would be frustrated, or at least endangered, if the Conservative Government, which had always been suspected of favouring war, were drawn into adventures abroad and so became open to the reproach of spending too much money. Lord Randolph said quite unreservedly that he had pressed this point of view upon Lord Salisbury and had asked him straight whether he meant to sacrifice the formidable task at home to his foreign policy.

On Lord Randolph's asking me my own opinion regarding his policy, I replied that I had already explained our own point of view, and that England must know for herself whether and what interests she possessed in the Balkans, and whether she desired to protect them or not. Finally he referred again to Constantinople and tried to explain to me that at least a considerable time must elapse, before Russia was in a position to seize Constantinople. (BISMARCK: '*Russia needs the Dardanelles only, not Constantinople.*') Although at the beginning of our conversation he denied the existence of any British interests in Constantinople, he obviously now abstained from declaring outright that England could calmly accept the entrance of the Russians into that city.

The conversation now turned on the question arising out of an article in the *Paris Figaro* on the subject of Egypt, how England would reply to any demand that she should evacuate the country. Lord Randolph refused to consider as imaginable

the possibility of this demand being made from any quarter. (BISMARCK: '*All very pleasant*' (*Bequem*).) But supposing it happened, he declared categorically that England would refuse the demand, even if she had eventually to fight for it. He added, '*Nous devons garder les Indes toujours et l'Egypte encore longtemps*'.

At the same time Lord Randolph betrayed a certain anxiety as to Germany's attitude, supposing some other Power were to demand evacuation at a future date. He said that it undoubtedly lay in our power to ruin the Conservative Government, if we decided to take action with regard to Egypt. In answer to his direct enquiry in this connection whether I thought that such a case might arise, I limited myself to the remark that there was no question of it at present and that in view of the existing friendly relations between Germany and England I could form no opinion on so distant a possibility.

Finally Churchill returned to the question of Austria and again expressed his doubt as to whether the Austrian Government would continue its inaction in face of the Russian activities in the East, which affected its interests nearly. (BISMARCK: '*The old story.*') I declined discussing Austria's policy and merely remarked finally that my personal impression was that Austria could not dream of standing up by herself for interests which were actually shared by others, and that she would prefer a peaceful understanding.

At the head of the foregoing despatch Bismarck remarked: '*Nothing new—the old attempt to push Austria into the fire.*'

*German Note.*

Lord Randolph Churchill's question regarding Germany's attitude in the Egyptian matter drew from Prince Bismarck a telegraphic instruction to Count Hatzfeldt (September 24th, 1886), as follows:

'Your Excellency will please revert to the question put by Churchill and inform him that we shall certainly take no part in any action by other Powers as regards Egypt. Nothing except unfriendly treatment in Colonial questions, which are of no serious import to England, would tempt us in this direction for years to come.'<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. 271

COUNT HATZFELDT TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
*September 24th, 1886*

*Private* (in his own handwriting).

It is unfortunately too late to get a further report of to-day's conversation with Lord Randolph Churchill drawn up and copied before the messenger's departure, so I permit myself to employ this intimate method of communicating with you.

Having heartily thanked me for the confidential assurance

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Memorandum of September 29th, 1886, p. 224.

regarding Egypt, which I made to him in the Imperial Chancellor's name, he explained how important it was for himself, as he was at this time preparing extensive financial reforms for Egypt and would have no fear of the objections which were to be expected from France, given that we took no part in any action in connection with Egypt. He then seized the initiative and returning to the subject of our conversation of September 20th respecting the general position of affairs in the Near East, spoke more or less as follows: He hoped that I had properly understood his position in the matter. His task, as regarded foreign policy, was to stand for nothing which might split the Unionist majority in the House. This must be maintained, as a break with it would mean an end of all Conservative aspirations and of all the institutions lying nearest our hearts, i.e. the Monarchy, House of Lords, Church, etc. The greatest care was necessary with an antagonist like Gladstone, who would take skilful and unscrupulous advantage of the smallest mistake, and the Government dared not incur the reproach of having drifted into costly enterprises.—Seeing, then, that he could only recommend in the House a foreign policy, which the majority was sure to support, there was in his opinion only one course possible for England. She could not take up a leading position abroad, but she could join with another Power, such as Austria (BISMARCK: *'She will not, however.'*) if both possessed the moral support of Germany. In this event he could assure me that England would co-operate fully and loyally. (BISMARCK: *'Not at all! England will have the same hesitations as now, and will be slower to take action, as others will be doing the work!'*) She would then go further, than I evidently thought possible now, for with Germany's moral support (BISMARCK: *'Strict neutrality!'*) he would be quite sure of his majority. Every one in England would easily understand that Germany, the only country with whom there was neither rivalry nor dispute, was England's natural ally. (BISMARCK: *'But England is not Germany's. Internal policy comes first in England.'*) There would then be support both in the House and the country for everything. England would stand with us, even if France wished to threaten us. (BISMARCK: *'Perhaps.'*)

I replied that I must content myself with expressing my opinion on the part of this programme which concerned Germany. I had said repeatedly both to him and to Lord Salisbury that in the East no German interests were affected. No German statesman could undertake the responsibility of driving his country into a war for such interests as did not concern us, a war in which, as he well knew, we should have to reckon with two powerful neighbours. Our policy was clearly indicated, and I had never left

Lord Salisbury in doubt on the subject. Lord Randolph must, therefore, strike out the part of his programme, involving 'the moral support of Germany'. (BISMARCK: 'Correct.') As to the rest, I could not put forward an opinion.

Churchill replied that he could see no possibility of taking any action with Austria alone, (BISMARCK: 'And Turkey!') even if she were willing to do so. He could not recommend this in the House. (BISMARCK: 'Schneider! biegt nur Pantsch, ein paroli mit solchem Kleinmuth ist kein Handel möglich. With such poor spirit there is nothing to be done.') He would have to fear the break-up of the Unionist majority, and to this he could not consent.

The present-day policy of England, that of making difficulties for Russia at Sofia, he considered quite incorrect. He would rather resign than recommend in the House action by England on these lines.

Having once more described our point of view, I closed the conversation, which, however, seems to me of great interest, as it shows, in contradistinction to the indifference he has displayed up to now, that Churchill, not to underestimate his present position and influence, is at heart not disinclined towards strong action, which, in his opinion, would not be unpopular in England. I must add my impression that the change in Churchill is due to Lord Salisbury's influence. (HERBERT BISMARCK: 'It looks to me as if Churchill wants "uns unter'm Löffel barbieren".')

Remark by Bismarck: 'Always the old story. If England refuses to take the lead, Austria will be foolish in counting on her. If Churchill is still keeping in with (noch Manschetten hat) Austria and Turkey, how can Austria be expected to bell the cat by herself? and be then left in the lurch by England—as we were in 1870?'<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. 273

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, VARZIN,  
September 27th, 1886

The Chancellor remarked on Count Hatzfeldt's letter in terms fully corresponding with his marginal notes, to the effect that in 1878 England had been prepared with Austria alone to enter the lists against Russia in the event of the Congress failing, and that this possibility had considerably influenced Russia in the direction of concessions. If England, although Turkey at that time was lying prostrate, was now too weak, in combination with Turkey, which had at the moment a good army, and Austria, then it was either dishonourable pretence or else a mass of pusillanimity, impossible to reckon with.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lord Randolph's account of this interview in the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill's Life of his father, II, 158.

## IV. 274

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, IN BERLIN,  
*September 28th, 1886*

The British Ambassador, who returned here yesterday, communicated to me confidentially a Memorandum written by Lord Iddesleigh, of which I took a copy. In discussing the passage on page 3, the Ambassador said that he had already told Lord Iddesleigh that England could not complain of want of knowledge of our political plans. Your Highness had repeatedly explained our position to him and declared that England could never count on our co-operation against Russia, as long as the latter made no direct attack.

He, the Ambassador, had clearly expressed his opinion to Lord Salisbury and Lord Iddesleigh, that, if only England would pursue a bold and comprehensible policy, she would find as many friends as she needed. But if the British Government continued to wait, until the others had adopted a policy, she would retire completely into the background and lose all weight in the Concert of Europe.

I now informed the Ambassador confidentially of the contents of Count Hatzfeldt's latest private letter<sup>1</sup> concerning a conversation with Lord Randolph Churchill, and added the remark that it was unfortunate for England that Churchill's views appeared to coincide so little with those of the Ambassador. When I reached the point of describing how Churchill had said to Count Hatzfeldt that England, in alliance with Austria, would be too weak to oppose Russia at any time, Sir Edward became very red and exclaimed: 'I call that a policy of cowardice.' (BISMARCK: '*The right expression.*') 'Luckily,' he added, 'Lord Randolph has not the last word with us in foreign policy, and I know that Lord Salisbury's opinions are very different. Churchill is intimate with the Russophil Radicals, such as Labouchere and Chamberlain; he is much more revolutionary than Conservative and only joined the Conservatives because he saw that, owing to the absolute lack of capacity there, his best chance of success was in belonging to the Conservative Party. I have a very poor opinion of Lord Randolph and avoid him as much as I can. He has not the slightest understanding of foreign politics (BISMARCK: '*Flat-catcher*' (*Bauerfänger*)). and when a statesman refrains on parliamentary grounds from carrying out a policy, which he knows to be right, he is acting unconscientiously. If he thinks he cannot bend Parliament to his way of thinking and has not the courage to act in opposition to it, it is his duty to resign. It is the greatest mistake we could make, if we let Russia have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 253.

Constantinople, as our new Radical would have it. If the Russians hold Constantinople, we shall be quite unable to keep Egypt and, as I think, India also. It is a fearful mistake to assume that the Russians, once they are before Constantinople, will refrain for ever from any further expansion and renounce the thought of war. A policy of conquest, like that of Russia, will never consent to any limitation. I have spoken to Lord Salisbury and also to Lord Iddesleigh in this sense and found them in agreement with me. By far the greater part of the Cabinet are behind these old Tory leaders. Lord Randolph has at most a couple of the members of the Cabinet on his side, and his influence on foreign policy is fortunately, therefore, diminishing.'

IV. 275-6

BERNARD VON BÜLOW, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN  
ST. PETERSBURG, TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 1st, 1886*

*In cipher.*

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador informed me very confidentially that the hitherto Anglophil Count Karolyi (Ambassador in London) had during his recent presence in Vienna sent word through Herr von Szögyényi (Sektionschef in the Foreign Office) to Count Kalnoky, who was attending the manœuvres in Galicia, that he, Count Karolyi, entreated the Minister to keep clear of England. England wished to thrust Austria against Russia and would not dream of helping Austria, even if war broke out between her and Russia.

*German Note.*

Since August, 1885, Sir Drummond Wolff had been British Special Envoy for Egyptian Affairs in Constantinople and Cairo. His efforts which on October 24th, 1885, had brought about the Anglo-Turkish Convention, were perpetually crossed by the French.<sup>1</sup>

IV. 276

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA,  
TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 4th, 1886*

*Confidential.*

Count Kalnoky, who read to me yesterday a communication from the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires in London, to which I shall refer again, let me take note of the enclosures. Reports had come to him from Constantinople, identical with those given by Herr von Radowitz, on the state of the negotiations in question. The Minister is following carefully the French intrigues

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 245.



that are going on there, but believes that this time, as usual, the Sultan, either by his well-known habit of refusing to make up his mind, or by some trick, would render the French Ambassador's efforts futile.

The British Premier's view, which came to light in this conversation, that *Egypt should not be given up*, is interesting.

It was not surprising that Lord Salisbury was hoping for an understanding with Austria regarding Bulgaria. The form in which England wished it was known, but surely by this time he must know that he could not count on sending Austria into the fire. (BISMARCK: '*Who knows?*')

Baron Hengelmüller (Counsellor of the Embassy in London) had written very confidentially that the British Ministers often spoke to him in the sense of an understanding; in fact, he was convinced that they would be prepared to enter into an alliance with Austria. (BISMARCK: '*Do they indeed?*') But the necessary conditions were never there to make such an alliance worth Austria's while.

It was improbable that the nation would follow the Government's lead, if it wished, for the sake of Bulgaria, to initiate any action directed against Russia. Lord Salisbury was not the man to carry out such a policy of his own accord. He depended entirely on Lord Randolph, who would never allow the Premier to rush into a forward foreign policy at the expense of domestic questions. (BISMARCK: '*?*') Lord Iddesleigh was a worthy man, but no one in England would follow him on such a path. . . .

Lord Randolph Churchill's Dartford speech proves the correctness of the Baron's opinions.

#### *German Note.*

In his speech, made on October 2nd, Lord Randolph had described the Government's attitude in the question of Bulgaria. In a characteristic passage he said that England would feel great satisfaction if Austria would start the great international task of protecting the freedom and independence of the Danube Principalities against the Russian autocracy. Cf. Lord Randolph Churchill's '*Life*,' II, 163.

Count Kalnoky remarked to me, in reference to this speech, that this English Minister was not dealing prudently (BISMARCK substitutes '*honestly*') in thus preparing public opinion for action of a more definite character, which Lord Iddesleigh appeared to have in view.

Sir A. Paget had brought to him only yesterday a very confidential memorandum, setting forth in serious and calm phraseology the political situation produced by the Bulgarian

affair and calling attention to the dangers to peace and the maintenance of the Treaties. The document also makes the tardy confession that the British Cabinet possesses important interests to defend in the Balkans. It openly admits that England would be obliged, if the need arose, to defend Constantinople. England could not take the preliminary steps to this end and to prevent any such infraction of the Treaties, unless supported by some one of the other Powers. (BISMARCK: '*An empty expression, not even then! They only hope to force Austria and us into it.*') England had no desire to call a war into being light-heartedly, but would prefer to find a peaceful solution for the affairs of the Balkan Peninsula. . . .

The answer to the question what to do next is obviously that England must seek to regain her lost political and diplomatic position on the Bosphorus. This task would probably fall to Sir W. White. . . .

Count Kalnoky desired for British policy all success in the course now to be followed. He was even ready to assist Sir W. White in his task of defending the principles of the Treaties. Austria's relations with Russia were at present excellent, and he hoped with confidence that, thanks to these good relations, the present difficulties would be overcome. . . .

The Minister considers the language held by the British Cabinet as significant, but has no real belief that any energetic policy will be carried out. (BISMARCK: '*Neither have I.*') He has, therefore, no intention of arousing any hopes in the English, which might damp their ardour. Lord Randolph's speech has proved sufficiently how the English seize any opportunity of allowing others to defend their interests. . . .

[The next conversation with Lord Randolph took place shortly after Lord Randolph's return from the Continent, where he had gone in search of health.<sup>1</sup>]

#### IV. 279

COUNT HATZFELDT TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,

*October 26th, 1886*

I beg to report my very confidential conversation with Lord Randolph Churchill with a view to presenting as clear a picture as possible of his whole attitude.

He first begged me to report to you, with his best respects, that discretion alone had prevented him, during his short stay in Berlin, from paying you a friendly visit. He had feared that such a step, added to the attention that his journey in search of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 229; also Lord Randolph Churchill's 'Life', II, 170.

health had anyhow aroused, might cause immeasurable criticism, which would be disagreeable perhaps to you also. He expressed the greatest hope that you would not take this neglect amiss.

Churchill proceeded to discuss high politics, at the same time assuring me that on his journey he had seen no one and had not met important personages either in Berlin, Paris or Vienna. The only exception had been a chance encounter with the Sectionschef, Szögyényi, at the British Military Attaché's in Vienna, on which occasion a discussion of the developments in Eastern politics arose of itself. He had said clearly to the Sectionschef that England could not act alone, but that if Austria would declare herself unmistakably in St. Petersburg against a Russian advance into Bulgaria, (he used the word 'ultimatum') England would associate herself with it without reserve. (BISMARCK: '?')

I remarked that personal observation had shown me that the feeling in Austria was that full British support right to the end could not be counted on, and that Austria would be better advised to come to an understanding with Russia. Churchill answered that he had met the same erroneous (BISMARCK: '?') impression in Szögyényi. He then tried eagerly to prove to me how unfounded such suspicions were. First of all, the British Cabinet was stronger, assuming that it made no mistakes and kept its Unionist majority, than Lord Beaconsfield had ever been. (BISMARCK: '*No guns, etc.*') Thus internal weakness could not be used as an argument against an understanding with England. Though action in the East by England single-handed could not be recommended to Parliament, it was absolutely certain (BISMARCK: '?') that both it and the country would consent (BISMARCK: '*Academically?*') to an understanding with the other interested Great Powers, (BISMARCK: '*Does he count us amongst these?*') if, as was here the case, the object of their common action was the maintenance of peace in Europe. Neither Germany, Austria nor England would be seeking any advantage or increase of power, whereas Russia alone was pursuing such objects and so threatening the maintenance of peace. Of Italy alone perhaps could it be said that she had always tried to fish in troubled waters.

Moreover, England's military weakness had in fact been exaggerated. (BISMARCK: '?') If there ever was a conflict between Russia and Austria, the latter would certainly be militarily at a disadvantage, and Galicia, lacking natural defences and with a garrison of only 50,000 men, would be exposed to attack by 150,000 Russians. He could, however, assure me that England could easily place fifty or sixty thousand picked troops at the disposal of a friendly Austria. A British fleet before Varna

also would give Russia subject for serious thought. (BISMARCK : '*How could it get there ? The Sultan holds the keys, and the English have let him slip away from them.*') )

As for Turkey, whose future importance he fully recognised, it was a fact that in the present circumstances public opinion in England would not as yet understand (BISMARCK : '!!') or permit active support of her. (BISMARCK : '*This statement nullifies all the rest.*') ) But all would be different, supposing England could and must enter into common action with other States. He, himself, would then not hesitate to demand a million sterling or more from the Treasury to assist the Porte and maintain the Turkish Army, and he had no fear of not succeeding.

When it came to be recognised, as it was bound to be, that there was a strong Government in England (BISMARCK : '?') capable of energetic military action, the mistrust which it encountered in Germany as well as in Austria, was incomprehensible. It was inconceivable that Lord Salisbury, having once declared frankly and openly England's intention of participating, should be thinking in the back of his mind of retiring from the affair and of leaving his Allies in the lurch. There was no fighting against this suspicion, unjustified by facts, if indeed it really existed, as there was no means of proving it unfounded. If it persisted, Russia would get her way, (BISMARCK : '*That would not matter to us.*') ) for England could not act alone and would have to submit to any concessions made by Austria. It would be most deplorable, if an agreement of all the Powers interested in maintaining the status quo and peace were brought to nought by a suspicion so trivial and motiveless.

Churchill then stated his ideas as to the grouping of the Powers. England could and would go with Austria, if Germany would at least maintain a benevolent silence. (BISMARCK : '*No objection.*') ) He assumed that Italy would join the alliance. . . . (BISMARCK : '*Trentino ?*') )

The impression that I gained from this long conversation was that Churchill is more desirous than ever of an understanding with Austria, and that he would concede, as far as he could, any guarantee, that might be demanded in Vienna.

I have not seen Salisbury yet, but hear that the Queen urgently desires a more energetic policy and brought pressure on him in this sense at Balmoral. . . .

The Turkish Ambassador\* (Rustem Pacha) very confidentially informs me in conversation that the Sultan's entourage has certainly been won over by Russia, but that he is certain that no agreement has been arrived at, from which the Sultan could not retire, if England at last behaves seriously and convinces the Porte that it can count on her support.

[Bismarck's reference to the Trentino, as the price of her joining the alliance, is interesting in view of Italy's acquisition of it after the War of 1914.]

[The following despatch was written on the same date as one dealing with the question of Egypt. (Cf. p. 233.)]

#### IV. 282

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 24th,*  
1886

I found Lord Randolph Churchill in some excitement about Austria, which was now again seemingly preparing to leave England in the lurch. (BISMARCK: '*Or the other way round.*') Count Karolyi had stated confidentially that the Austrian Government intended to allow a Russian occupation of Bulgaria to take place, if assured by Russia that it was only to be for a time. This, however, would produce a very dangerous situation for England, since it would enable the Russians to prepare great trouble for her in Afghanistan. If England could not count on Austria's co-operation, it would be better for her to end the state of strain with Russia and come to an agreement with her over Bulgaria.

On my declaring my ignorance of these words of the Austrian Ambassador's or of any understanding with Austria, from which she could withdraw, Lord Randolph replied emphatically that Austria well knew that England had promised co-operation against Russia in the event of the occupation of Bulgaria.

Count Karolyi told me in strict confidence that he had never said anything of the sort and had only discussed the question academically with Lord Randolph. His sole task here was to enquire and ascertain how far England could be reckoned on. Austria's position had been defined in Count Kalnoky's speeches, and it was known here that Austria would be obliged to protest against an actual occupation. The question then to be dealt with, and the subject of his academic discussion with Lord Randolph, was whether a definite stand could be made against Russia, or whether they must be content with a protest, after the occupation was completed, and wait for further developments. Lord Randolph was pressing for the first alternative, as he thought that a war, in which England might be involved, would thus certainly be avoided, (BISMARCK: '??') whereas mere protest, whilst accepting the facts, must finally lead to a war. (BISMARCK: '*Not necessarily.*')

Count Karolyi added that no formal assurance of an alliance against Russia had been communicated here as yet. Without alliances Austria could not allow herself to be pushed into war. (BISMARCK: '*Correct.*')

The Ambassador has heard from Vienna that Count Kalnoky wishes an International Commission set up at Philippopolis in place of the present Turko-Bulgarian Commission for the regulation of the Union, in order to assert the European character of the whole question of Bulgaria.

IV. 283

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, OF THE FOREIGN  
OFFICE, FRIEDRICHSRUH, *November 27th, 1886*

If it was certain that, if Austria were attacked by Russia on the grounds of the Eastern Question—Bulgaria or the Dardanelles,—she could rely on England's support, and if we had absolute assurance of the fact, it would not be for us to discourage Austria in her resistance to Russia. But as long as we must believe that not England is being left in the lurch by Austria, as Lord Randolph Churchill asserts, but rather Austria by England,—and parliamentary motives for this are easy to imagine—we also shall be forced, not only to dissuade Austria from direct resistance to Russia, but even to discourage her by every means in our power. The idea of German-Austrian combination for war against Russia and France would not alarm us, if the Austrian army were proportionately as strong and well-trained as our own and were equally well equipped. Unfortunately this is not the case, and the burden of a future war on two fronts (*Doppelkrieges*) would therefore tend to rest upon our shoulders. It would thus be a war, which we could be prepared to undertake, only if we were directly attacked, and if our independence was threatened,—in fact, under circumstances, when the most unequal fight must be fought out.

If Lord Randolph wishes us to understand that if Austria takes up the gauntlet, British support is assured to her, we can only take it as dishonest, considering all that we hear from Vienna and from Your Excellency through Count Karolyi, to lure on Austria and then to desert her, on the assumption that we shall support Austria,—whilst England remains neutral. Lord Randolph is himself in no position to give or fulfil this assurance. For the moment that he retires from or is driven out of the Cabinet, the situation is entirely altered, and every pledge given by him becomes null and void.

I do not know whether Russia intends to occupy Bulgaria. But I am convinced that a definite policy of hostility by Austria against Russia in such a case would not avert war, but would cause it to break out immediately, for Russia, conscious of her superiority, will seek war with Austria, as soon as she can be certain that Austria is entering it without allies. If Russia was assured that Austria, attacked by her, would be supported by

England, she would renounce the idea of attacking. England need merely hint in St. Petersburg her intention to stand by Austria, in order to maintain peace with honour. But as long as England continues to procrastinate in her dealings with Russia, it is in Austria's interest to avoid war with Russia, even at some sacrifice. The probability of finding Germany behind Austria would not necessarily deter Russia from attacking Austria, for Russia rightly calculates on Germany's power being paralysed by a simultaneous attack by France. . . .

Lord R. Churchill is quite right in not doubting that our attitude in the event of a conflict between England and France would in no case be hostile to England or even indifferent. Any serious menace on the part of France against England would draw us into the fight, just as at Waterloo.

There is up to the present no indication to convince us that England is preparing to safeguard the interests that she and Austria possess in common. Such action would need to be preceded by an increase of activity in fitting out the British Fleet and in pressing forward the alliance with the Porte. Notwithstanding the Porte's weakness in other directions, the fact of her holding the Straits puts into her hands the deciding factor in a war between England and Russia.

In my eyes, therefore, the only right course for our policy at present is to preserve peace and to exercise all possible influence in Vienna to this end.

Anything that you have promised Lord Randolph to keep secret must naturally also be kept from Lord Salisbury; but without Lord Salisbury Lord Randolph is naturally less able to give us a pledge regarding England's attitude than both of them could in open agreement.

#### IV. 285

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *December 5th*,  
1886

I had yesterday an opportunity of putting confidentially to Lord Randolph Churchill the points in Your Highness' Memorandum of December 27th, giving them out as my personal views.<sup>1</sup>

He admitted freely that Austria was in no position to provoke a conflict with Russia without alliances. He further recognised that our interests prompted us to prevent this eventuality, if possible. He did not deny that so far there had been no official understanding with Austria and added that they were justified in Vienna in treating his utterances as unofficial.

He considered that the difficulty in reaching an official understanding lay not in the relations and friendly feeling between

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 278.

the two parties, but purely in the personalities, who were summoned to the task owing to their official position. Neither Lord Iddesleigh nor Count Karolyi were of a character to bring the matter to a conclusion, and he feared that, until a change took place, things would remain as they were.

In the matter itself Lord Randolph sticks to all his former utterances. If Austria with Germany's tacit connivance will take up a decided position with regard to the East, England will join her and throw her whole weight into the scales. He also repeated emphatically that a strong British fleet, strong enough to force the Dardanelles, would at the same time appear in the Black Sea. In six weeks England could equip over 60,000 of the best troops and send them to the seat of war. (BISMARCK: '??')

The Minister protested strongly against the rumours that the fleet (BISMARCK: '*And the Austrian Army.*') was neglected, inefficient and insufficiently armed. It was in an excellent state (BISMARCK: '?') and would undoubtedly prove its efficiency.

The fact that at this time no great military establishment was to be seen here as in other countries was clearly due to special conditions in England. Nothing could be done about it, so long as a war-danger was not clearly imminent. No harm could come of it, however, for such a war could not break out in a night, (BISMARCK: '? *On the contrary.*') and with the means at the Government's command six weeks would suffice for preparation. (BISMARCK: '?')

Once the war-danger became real, the British Government would then be in a position to demand a subsidy in Parliament for Turkey, so as to ensure the co-operation of the Turkish Army. (BISMARCK: '*It might be Russian by that time, and the Dardanelles already in Russian hands.*')

Lord R. Churchill added: 'We should then expect nothing from a friendly Germany, but the exercise of her influence in Constantinople, so that the return of our ships from the Black Sea through the Dardanelles should not be prevented.' . . .

(BISMARCK: '*Our influence would be powerless, once the Porte was delivered into the hands of Russia. The very first British measure of preparation for war with Russia must be to secure the Porte and the Turkish army before the war; the old traditional Anglo-Turkish Alliance, which was destroyed by Gladstone's stupidity. It could be obtainable, if the Sultan feared England more than Russia.*')

The conversation then turned upon France and her probable attitude in the event of war between Russia and Austria. I expressed my conviction that, whatever happened, (BISMARCK: '??')



we should expect to be attacked by France and to have to resist it with all our strength. (BISMARCK: '*I think the fear would be on France's side. In any case we should be able to protect England from a French attack. Probably our sword would keep that of the French in its scabbard.*') Lord Randolph replied that he thought that an understanding could be found regarding the amount of assistance England could promise to us. In any case England could undertake the protection of our colonies against all attacks.

Speaking generally, the Minister considered that the war-danger would not arise until the spring, so that there was time to come to an understanding. Between England and Austria an agreement could be reached any day and without difficulty, the moment that Your Highness considered it desirable and would give your assistance. (BISMARCK: '*That is the fact, and yet there is no understanding so far.*') In this case, however, peace would probably be assured. England would be able to announce in St. Petersburg that she would not allow Austria to be attacked. (BISMARCK: '*England could have done so long ago, if she had chosen.*') Such an announcement, supported by an understanding between England, Austria and Italy, with the probable addition of Turkey, would have all the greater success in St. Petersburg, seeing that the Emperor Alexander himself was not desirous of war. . . .

(BISMARCK: '*Certainly; but this would demand of England an active foreign policy, which would in its turn require relief to the internal strain (Ireland).*')

#### IV. 287

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, December 6th, 1886

Lord Salisbury, with whom I had to discuss the further treatment of the Samoa question to-day, shows serious anxiety regarding the chances of maintaining European peace in the spring. His impression is that the Bulgarian question is now in the background and that the chief danger to peace lies in Russia's enmity against Austria. (BISMARCK: '*Certainly.*')

The Prime Minister keenly regretted the impossibility of reaching an understanding with Count Kalnoky, who met every advance on England's part with evasions. With the best will in the world he, Lord Salisbury, was unable to bind the country absolutely by definite promises, because British Ministers had no constitutional authority to do so. (BISMARCK: '*Is that so!*')

As things were, there would have to be some definite event; as for instance, an attack by Russia upon Galicia, which would undoubtedly arouse a storm of public opinion here and enable him to come forward actively in support of Austria.

Meanwhile he was occupied with the question whether he could make a definite move in favour of peace at St. Petersburg without going outside the bounds of his competence (BISMARCK: 'I') and exposing himself to censure by Parliament. (BISMARCK: '*Then England must avowedly desire war, if her Government may not work for peace.*') At the end of the Russo-Turkish war, when Russia was delaying the evacuation of Turkey, he had been successful, by an apparent indiscretion, in conveying to St. Petersburg the utterance that England would, with her whole strength, place herself on the side of Turkey, and this had been effective. He is now seriously considering the question of selecting some similar means of warning the Russian Government that England will not look quietly on at an hostile attack by Russia on Austria, jointly with the Porte, (BISMARCK: '*If England will give only the slightest indication that she treats an attack on Austria as a casus belli, peace is assured, with or without the Porte. Faced by British threats, Turkey will never dare join with Russia. We keep France quiet, and Italy will certainly not oppose England.*') but will take action to oppose it, and if she cannot succeed in forcing an entrance into the Dardanelles, she will throw all the Balkan nationalities, which are hostile to Turkey—Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia—against the Porte.

Lord Salisbury is going to inform me, as soon as he has decided on the scheme and the means of carrying it out, under the special condition that the matter remains an absolute secret between himself and Your Highness.

Lord Salisbury's words to-day confirm for me the impression left by Lord Randolph Churchill's latest communications, that threats will now be applied to the Sultan, since he apparently means to cling to the understanding with Russia. (BISMARCK: '*That would be the practical way.*')

#### IV. 289

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, IN VIENNA, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
December 14th, 1886

I have communicated to Count Kalnoky verbally and in strict confidence Count Hatzfeldt's remarks on some utterances of Lord Randolph Churchill's.<sup>1</sup>

The Minister thanked me and said that he also had received similar reports from London on words spoken by Lord Randolph. The latter's language was much more pointed than Lord Salisbury's, with whom in the end lay the final decision. (H. BISMARCK: '*No, Randolph as Leader of the Commons.*') But after all, Lord Churchill (*sic*) was only saying that, if Austria took up a decided line with regard to the East, England would support her. Austria

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 264.

would have to take the first step and go forward ; but in Vienna there was no thought of declaring war on Russia on account of Bulgaria.

If an agreement is successfully arranged between England, Austria and Italy regarding a common attitude on the Bulgarian question, and if Turkey declares her adhesion to it, Count Kalnoky shares Lord Randolph Churchill's opinion that a great impression will certainly be made on St. Petersburg and that perhaps a peaceful settlement of the questions outstanding will be bound to follow. He still thinks, however, that there is a great gulf fixed between the honest intentions of this British Minister and their fulfilment.

It should not, in fact, be difficult to arrange an agreement between England and Austria. I threw in the remark that Lord Randolph considered that the obstacle to an official understanding lay in the characters of Lord Idlesleigh and Count Karolyi. The Minister smiled and said that the same idea had occurred to him before.

#### IV. 290

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *December 21st, 1886*

The Prime Minister has of late been less often in London, so I have mostly seen Lord Randolph Churchill. This has, if I may say so, its good side, inasmuch as he always, as I have frequently proved, gives the Prime Minister a very exact account of our conversations, and the latter is thus fully informed of the points to be discussed.

At our last meeting I found Lord Randolph's view on the whole unchanged. . . . He is of opinion that in the questions now prominent at Constantinople an absolutely neutral attitude on the part of our representative would suffice to deter the Porte from hasty decisions in Russia's favour, for instance, as regards the closing of the Dardanelles. This he regards as the touchstone for British policy in the East, for, if hostilities commenced, England could only operate with any real success in the Black Sea, and she would be, if not crippled, at any rate seriously restricted by the closing of the Straits in this, the only effective action possible to her, and would be exposed throughout to the risk of heavy losses at sea.

At the same time he is quite aware that England must make every effort to restore her influence in the Golden Horn and to end as soon as possible the Sultan's penchant for drifting into ever greater concessions to the Russians. He listened, therefore, with great attention to the information I was able to give to him out of the enclosures in the despatch of December 6th (treating of the decrease of British influence in Constantinople). My

information evidently made a great impression on him, and he rejoiced to see the confirmation of his opinion that England must resort to threats with the Sultan. I think I am not wrong in tracing the article in yesterday's *Morning Post* to our last interview, and now it remains to be seen what impression these threatening words will produce at Yildis Kiosk.

We came to the question of England's undoubted ability to ensure peace by a decisive word spoken in St. Petersburg in Austria's favour. The Minister by no means denied the probable success of such action. But speaking in the interests of England, he urged as an objection against this desirable object, that the assurance of peace in the East, brought about in this manner, would be accompanied by the risk of offending Russia through England's interference and driving her to extremities. She might shortly seek a revenge in Asia, which would be dangerous for England. The Minister added: 'Who will help us against Russia there, if after assuring peace in Eastern Europe we have to bear the brunt of Russia's enmity?'

From this point of view I think it clearly evident that Lord Randolph, even if he is not actually working for war, thinks any serious participation by England in the East justified, only if circumstances permit the struggle for India to be fought out with the chances in England's favour, in the Black Sea.

As regards England's efficiency as an ally in such a struggle, the Minister remained unshaken in his former assertions. He said in addition that in four, not six, weeks, 40,–60,000 men could not only be equipped, but could be already at the seat of war. Their replacement here by the well-organised Militia, (BISMARCK: 'P') which was fully sufficient for service at home, was easy and already provided for. As to the Fleet, which was as strong and efficient as at any time,—the Mediterranean Squadron could be in the Black Sea within ten days. It would be replaced by the Home Squadron, and the latter as quickly by the Reserve Squadron.

I feel I must report a remarkable sentence of the Minister's. We spoke of France and the permanent menace to European peace emanating from her. He said: 'Au fond, c'est la France qui est notre ennemie commune, et nous n'aurons du repos que quand elle sera complètement écrasée.' I replied: 'If that is your opinion, we ought to be able to count on your help, if we were involved in a war with France, and to a greater extent than the mere protection of our colonies, whose fate would certainly be decided on the battlefields of Europe.' Lord Randolph thought for a moment and then said: 'We might perhaps declare in Paris that we would stand no interference with the traffic through the Canal.' (BISMARCK: 'I') Without going any

deeper I said: 'I should have thought you would go further than that, as your own interests would be affected.'

When it comes to the point, I think that this question may be re-opened with Lord Randolph with good hopes of success.

I met Lord Salisbury later in conversation, and became certain that he was fully informed of what had passed between Lord Randolph and myself. We came at once to the question of the *démarche* in favour of peace at St. Petersburg, which had not yet been carried out, and Lord Salisbury remarked: 'Et bien, vous savez quelles épines Churchill a dans le pied à ce sujet.' I agreed and added quickly that we, as I always informed him, could not direct our policy against Russia on account of the Bulgarian question. Lord Salisbury did not deny this, but merely deplored that the disappearance of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria had taken his most essential weapon out of his hand. 'C'était mon épée qui a été brisée dans nos mains.' (BISMARCK: '*A blunt weapon.*')

*German Note.*

Prince Alexander, whom England had tried to support to the utmost, finally abdicated early in September, 1886.

What he lacked now was wind for his sails. He must wait until one arose and allowed him to sail forward. This would happen, as he had always told me, when Austria was threatened. (BISMARCK: '*If the Russians know this, they will keep quiet.*'). 'Cela agira comme une tempête sur l'opinion publique en Angleterre.'

The Prime Minister was especially interested by my information regarding Constantinople and the Sultan's attitude. He heartily agreed that the only means of influencing the Sultan now was by threats and spoke of his intention of supplying Sir W. White direct with the necessary confidential instructions. We may assume from this that Sir William White will quickly be in a position, with direct authority from Lord Salisbury, to call the Sultan's attention to the dangers, which threaten him from England, if he persists in his concessions to Russia and fails to alter his anti-British policy.

I have the impression that the meeting of Parliament, which is imminent, will be the signal for a pause in foreign politics. The Ministry will wish to ascertain how the House will receive it, and whether its majority is assured.

*German Note.*

On November 9th, 1886, Lord Salisbury spoke on the foreign situation at the Lord Mayor's Banquet and made it plain that England intended to declare complete association with Austria, if she were forced to take action against Russia on the Bulgarian question. 'This affair affects

Austria above all,' he said, 'and Austria's decisions must be allowed special weight in the councils of the British Government. Austria's policy will to a great extent govern that of England.'

IV. 293

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, VIENNA, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*January 11th, 1887*

Sir Augustus Paget returned here from leave yesterday and spoke to me on English politics somewhat as follows :

Lord Randolph Churchill's departure from the Cabinet <sup>1</sup> has been a great embarrassment to the Premier. The incident has been much criticised in England. Mr. Goschen, once successfully introduced into the Ministry, would bring his and Lord Hartington's adherents with him, and Lord Salisbury's Cabinet would clearly be stronger. The management of foreign affairs would certainly gain by the fact that the Premier had taken it into his own hands.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Chamberlain's supposed leaning towards Mr. Gladstone arouses no anxiety. It is assumed that he will not subject his opinions on the Irish question to Mr. Gladstone's. Rather is this behaviour a manoeuvre designed to drive out Gladstone from the leadership of the Radical Party.

As for foreign politics, the Ambassador considered that the position outlined by Lord Salisbury in his famous speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet was unchanged.<sup>3</sup> England desired peace to be maintained. Lord Salisbury would be accommodating in Eastern affairs, if proposals, emanating from Russia, were made for an understanding with the Powers. To this end the principle of the integrity of the Berlin Treaty must be observed.

If, in spite of the British Cabinet's desire, there were no agreement, and Austria-Hungary were forced to oppose Russian aggressions in the Balkan Peninsula, England would support her with all her strength.

It was thought in England that Austria-Hungary would not suffer Russia to march into and occupy Bulgaria ; this is borne out by public announcements made in Vienna. But supposing that, contrary to expectation, Austria looked on quietly at such action on the part of Russia, England might find herself obliged to act independently in defence of her own interests in the East. England could not permit Russia to pursue a policy, which would end in the Straits falling into Russian hands.

<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded as Chancellor of the Exchequer by Mr. Goschen, a Liberal Unionist. Cf. Lord Randolph Churchill's 'Life', II, 213.

<sup>2</sup> On the death of Lord Iddesleigh in January, 1887, Lord Salisbury became Foreign Secretary in addition to being Prime Minister.

<sup>3</sup> See note above.

Count Kalnoky, who had spoken to the Ambassador, but only for a short time, informs me that the latter had expressed just the same sentiments, but had not said that England would act alone, if Constantinople was occupied by the Russians.

The Minister repeated his views exactly as before, as I recently had the honour to report. It appears to me as though he has even now been obliged to alter them, for he said that it was very difficult to say no continually to a friendly Government ; but he still firmly believed that it was not right policy now to come to a hard and fast treaty-understanding with England, which when the time came, would come into existence automatically. (BISMARCK : ' ? ')

## CHAPTER XIX

### BULGARIA, FROM THE GERMAN STAND- POINT, DECEMBER, 1886

[During December, 1886, Germany had to endure the reproaches of both Russia and Austria for her apparent lukewarmness in taking the side of one or the other in the Bulgarian question. Bismarck was determined to remain at peace and in his arguments made the most of the danger of invasion by France. It was the beginning of the war danger which was averted greatly owing to Lord Salisbury's firmness in the following year.]

[On September 18th, 1885, a rising occurred in Eastern Roumelia, after which Prince Alexander of Bulgaria proclaimed the union of the two Bulgarias (September 20th). Turkey appealed to the Powers to intervene. A conflict between Servia and Bulgaria broke out in November, and Bulgaria was victorious. The status quo ante, however, was restored by the Treaty of Bucharest, March 3rd, 1886.]

#### V. 85

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, AT FRIEDRICHSRUH,  
*December 2nd, 1886*

The Chancellor requests that enclosed circular (not given), dated St. Petersburg, November 11th, 1886, be communicated confidentially to General von Schweinitz (Ambassador in St. Petersburg) along with the following statement:

We fully share the views and wishes expressed by Russia respecting Bulgaria, which correspond fully with the spirit of the decisions of the Congress of Berlin. The tendency of the latter was not to set aside the results of the Russian victory in the Balkans, but merely to modify it by weakening the action of the Peace of San Stefano in its territorial application in Southern Bulgaria. None of the Signatory Powers then expressed any intention of removing Northern Bulgaria—the present Principality—from Russian influence. Indeed the justification of Russian influence there is recognised by the fact that to Russia was entrusted the constitution, the organisation of the country, and the choice of the ruler. This point of view has found expression in the state of affairs existing in the Principality until September, 1885, by virtue of which the highest authority in the land was in the hands of a relative of the Russian Imperial House, and the



Bulgarian Army, as well as the appointment of Ministers was mainly dependent on Russian influence. This fact and the silent acquiescence by all the Powers of Europe during the 7 years following the Congress of Berlin are evidence that the predominance of Russian influence in Bulgaria was in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty. The events of and since September of last year caused a change in the essential situation, but for us the measure of the justified claims, resting on the Treaties, remains the same. The Imperial Government has therefore neither call nor intention to oppose the Russian Government's efforts to restore its influence, justified by treaty, in Bulgaria, nor to make more difficult the measures undertaken by the Russian Government to restore the situation created by the Congress. It has refrained the more from all criticism of these aspirations, since the Russian Government has not asked for our advice or views on the methods it has selected. Our own interests do not oblige us to mix diplomatically in Bulgarian affairs, and our inclination to be actively useful to our Russian friends in a field which is without interest to us, would be injurious to our relations towards other Powers in matters which more nearly concern us. In a situation resulting from the events of centuries the chief duty of German policy consists in safeguarding the Empire against all attacks, which may threaten the possessions and territorial security of Germany, and which sooner or later we shall have to consider in view of the 200 years' history of our relations with France and of the strides that the Republican and Socialistic movement have made in that country. Our present geographical and political situation makes this obligation so compelling, that we are able to give the Eastern question a smaller measure of attention than is the case with those other Powers, which have greater interests in the East.

You will repeatedly assure M. de Giers in answer to his despatch to Count Schouvaloff (for the communication of which I wish to offer my thanks, having read it with interest) that Russian policy in Bulgaria need expect neither opposition nor difficulties from us, but that the position of the German Empire constrains us to pursue only those aims, which are inevitably forced on us by our own need of security and peace.

The Chancellor wishes the above despatch translated into French, so that if M. de Giers desires it, Herr von Schweinitz can present him with a copy.

He also wishes Count Schouvaloff to be spoken to in the same sense.

Since the despatch states that we have received an authentic copy of the Russian Circular, His Highness requests that Count Schouvaloff be asked to supply one, the reason being that His

Highness has been informed of the contents and wishes to see the actual text.

V. 90

M. DE GIERS, IN ST. PETERSBURG, TO COUNT SHOVALOFF, RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN, 27 November (new style) 9 December, 1886

L'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne m'a donné communication d'une dépêche de M. le Prince de Bismarck dont Votre Excellence trouvera ci-joint copie.

Elle a été immédiatement placée sous les yeux de l'Empereur.

Sa Majesté a été extrêmement satisfaite des déclarations si nettes et si catégoriques du Prince Chancelier et de l'interprétation équitable qu'il donne au Traité de Berlin quant à la question particulière de la Russie à l'égard de la Bulgarie.

Notre auguste Maître se plaît à y voir une preuve de son désir de resserrer les relations d'amitié et de confiance entre nos deux pays.

L'Empereur comprend parfaitement que l'intérêt supérieur de la sécurité de l'Allemagne doit préoccuper avant tout M. le Prince de Bismarck. Sa Majesté se plaît à croire que dans cet ordre d'idées le Prince Chancelier fait aussi entrer la vieille amitié qui a uni jusqu'à présent la Russie et la Prusse et qui est pour toutes deux un gage de sécurité mutuelle.

L'Empereur aime, par conséquent, à compter sur le concours bienveillant de l'Allemagne pour arriver à une solution de la crise bulgare conforme aux droits et aux intérêts légitimes reconnus à la Russie dans les limites du Traité de Berlin qu'elle n'a jamais eu l'intention d'enfreindre.

Mais dans la pratique, Sa Majesté regretterait que le bon vouloir du Gouvernement allemand fut neutralisé par les relations qu'il doit entretenir avec d'autres Puissances (BISMARCK : '*Not by this, but by the need of remembering the enmity of France*'), dont l'action (BISMARCK : '*i.e., Austria. That would not be so necessary, if it were not for France*'), est précisément l'obstacle principal qui s'oppose au rétablissement de la salubre et légitime influence que la Russie revendique en Bulgarie. (BISMARCK : '*Then it is not France ?*')

M. le Prince de Bismarck ne peut pas ignorer que le peuple bulgare pour la délivrance duquel la Russie s'est imposé tant de sacrifices et qui a conservé des sentiments de gratitude et d'attachement (BISMARCK : '??') pour la Puissance libératrice, est tenu dans la terreur par un Gouvernement d'aventuriers révolutionnaires qui ont donné à la Bulgarie l'apparence de l'hostilité envers la Russie dans le but d'obtenir les sympathies et l'assistance de l'étranger. (BISMARCK : '*An imagination of Kaulbars*'. *Let us*

*pretend to believe it / so long as we do not have to swear to it.*') Son Altesse ne peut pas non plus ignorer que ces manœuvres qui entretiennent dans le pays l'agitation et l'anarchie ont trouvé des encouragements et des garanties d'impunité dans l'attitude officielle de quelques Puissances. (BISMARCK : '*Admettons qu'il en soit ainsi, pourvu que notre silence suffise.*')

Sa Majesté l'Empereur dans l'intérêt de la paix, a opposé jusqu'à présent beaucoup de patience et de modération à ces excitations, qui prolongent l'état de crise où se débat la Bulgarie et qui entretiennent en Europe une inquiétude peu favorable au maintien de la paix. C'est là surtout le danger qu'il est urgent de conjurer en accélérant le moment où le peuple bulgare, rendu à lui-même, pourra faire connaître légalement ses vœux et mettre les Puissances qui lui portent intérêt, à même de se concerter pour y satisfaire.

La circulaire turque qui a rencontré l'approbation du Cabinet de Berlin,—trace dans ce but une voie qui pourrait conduire à un bon résultat, si elle était franchement et fermement appuyée par les Puissances.

(BISMARCK : '*In Sofia? What will the Powers do if the scoundrels let us down? Question de dignité.*')

Nous saurions gré à M. le Prince de Bismarck, s'il voulait bien user de la grande influence qu'il possède auprès des Cabinets avec lesquels il entretient des relations amicales, afin de les amener à seconder loyalement nos efforts de conciliation, en mettant un terme aux encouragements qui entravent la solution équitable et pacifique de la crise.

Vous êtes autorisé à donner lecture de la présente à M. le Prince de Bismarck et à lui en faire parvenir une copie.

GIERS.

(BISMARCK : '*If Giers does not know that we have already done all we can in Vienna, he is badly informed. We can't use threats in Vienna. They threaten us too much in the Russian press, for us to be able to make an enemy of Austria.*')

V. 145

*German Note.*

Prince Reuss reported from Vienna on November 26th that Austria had proposed bringing the question of Eastern Roumelia, which had been dealt with hitherto by the Turkish-Bulgarian Commission, before the Signatory Powers of the Congress of Berlin.

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
IN VIENNA, December 3rd, 1886

*Secret.*

The Chancellor considers that the Austrian proposal to the Porte reported by you does not correspond with the spirit of

Art. II of the secret Treaty and of Art. V of the additional Protocol of June 18th, 1881.

The latest Austrian *démarche* touches one of the main results of the Berlin Treaty of 1878,—the separation of Northern and Southern Bulgaria,—and the present Austrian notion of uniting them again, i.e., the partial reinstatement of the Treaty of San Stefano, which contemplated welding both districts together, entails decidedly a modification of the territorial status quo and comes under Art. II of the secret Treaty. It is also one of the 'cas spéciaux' for which an understanding between the representatives of the three Powers is provided in Art. V of the additional Protocol. His Highness fears therefore that Russia will feel annoyance at this action by Austria alone, in consideration of the Treaty decisions above mentioned.

Urged by this sequence of ideas, the Chancellor begs you to make suitable use of the following passage in a letter from M. de Giers to Count Shouvaloff, in which he comments on a speech by Count Andrassy: <sup>1</sup>

'Leur effet le plus grave sera de détruire toute créance dans l'efficacité et même l'existence de la triple entente.'

'Sous ce rapport les commentaires du Comte Andrassy sont assez clairs. Ils montrent comment cette entente est comprise à Pesth.'

'Or, la conviction que les trois grands Empires du centre de l'Europe étaient d'accord pour éviter tout conflit entre eux et pour apaiser ceux, qui pourraient troubler la paix générale, inspirait une grande sécurité. C'était comme le lest, qui préservait le navire européen de trop fortes secousses. Sa disparition se fera lourdement sentir sur toute la situation politique.'

The Chancellor shares M. de Giers' anxieties and would warn Austria not to continue putting obstacles in the way of the Secret Treaty. If by their action the Austrians show how little they value the Russian entente, they will soon find if the Russians are repulsed in Bulgaria, they may take strong action in Servia, Roumania and Bosnia and make the Austrians uncomfortable there. There are symptoms of it already.

Having become convinced that Austria will not acquiesce in the division of the spheres of influence, we have not gone on with the idea, but are waiting on the chance of a different point of view turning up, supposing the Russian agitations in Roumania, Servia and Bosnia come to a head, and Montenegro, which hitherto has been kept in check by Russia, breaks loose.

<sup>1</sup> *German Note.*

On November 13th Count Andrassy made a great speech in the Delegations, and complained that the German-Austro-Hungarian Alliance had been made worthless by the unnatural grouping of the Three-Emperor Alliance, which had placed Germany in a quite impossible situation.

Prince Bismarck considers Count Andrassy's action a great calamity. He quite understands that Count Andrassy would, from the Hungarian standpoint, prefer to make war on Russia, if he counts on having the German army in Hungary's train. But our interests are different, and they make peace with Russia a much more important affair for us than the question, for which she wishes to fight Russia, is for Hungary. The lack of moderation in the claims, which Count Andrassy makes on our Alliance with Austria, the demand that the German Empire shall consent entirely to serve the wishes of Hungary, must make us very doubtful about continuing the Alliance. We have no intention of binding ourselves to the tail of Hungary's comet, but shall move in a regular orbit, capable of exact calculation.

[Here refer to a conversation of Count Hatzfeldt with Lord Randolph Churchill, December 5th, 1886, p. 264 ]

V. 147

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
IN VIENNA, *December 10th, 1886*

*Secret.*

The point of the instructions forwarded to you by messenger to-day (not given) is to recommend Austria a policy of reserve and especially to avoid warlike complications about Bulgaria.

The Chancellor instructs me in connection with this to write to you that we must be all the more cautious in doing anything that might bring on a war, since the condition of Austria's military stores and arsenals offers some anxiety. It should also be mentioned that financial and political considerations and possibly also national divisions in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy might at the decisive moment prevent that Empire from supporting us with the energy which might be expected from the excellence of its man-power.

Prince Bismarck requests you to speak in this sense to Count Kalnoky orally and in strict confidence. The King of Saxony has already done so, but in vain.

V. 96

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, AT FRIEDRICHSRUH,  
*December 14th, 1886*

The Chancellor wishes a confidential despatch to be drafted to Herr von Schweinitz, covering a copy of the Russian despatch of November 27th, to the following effect :

We are ready to support the wishes of Russia, as far as we can wherever there are forces at hand. But in Sofia itself we cannot go begging, unless measures of some sort, providing for

the event of a refusal, are decided upon beforehand. We do not wish to be exposed to the risk of expressing desires or demands to people like the Bulgarians, which they might either accept or refuse, without the fear of any consequences. It would be for us *une question de dignité*. We could not advance into the country, as it would be geographically impossible, nor could we place ourselves on an equality with the Government there. If we could threaten them in Sofia with unpleasant consequences or force as a result of a refusal, it would be a different matter ; but it would be beneath our dignity to make a request which might be rejected.

The Chancellor gathers with regret from M. de Giers' letter to Count Shouvaloff that the only result of our friendly explanation has been a renewed attempt to make us work for Russia's interests in Vienna. He was reminded forcibly of the time after the Congress of Berlin. We supported consistently and energetically every one of Russia's wishes in Vienna. Likewise also at the Congress of Berlin there was no Russian proposal, which we did not support and victoriously carry through. The idea that we are expected to do Russia's work for her in Vienna and elsewhere, as the unavowed agents of her policy, is on a par with that which inspires the Hungarian conception of Germany's relations towards Austria. It would be impossible between Powers on the most friendly terms for one to be entirely at the service of the other's policy, and yet this would be what Hungary and Russia are demanding from us. We ourselves have never claimed that Russia should intervene on our behalf in Paris in favour of our demands and Peace, or should help to calm down the French feelings of revenge, although it must have been clear to Russia that the freedom of our political action in Russia's favour would be greater, if our relations towards France were on a more settled basis.

His Excellency then continued : At the time when the Turkish War was expected, I put to Count Peter Shouvaloff the question whether Germany could ally herself so closely with Russia, as to eclipse the third Imperial Power, Austria. I expressed my fear that we should then be left alone with Russia and France on the Continent, and Count Shouvaloff explained that this situation might be acceptable, since there were no conflicting interests between us and Russia. I must admit this fact ; we have many common interests, and none conflicting, except the economic one. Nevertheless, after we had in the meantime put all our influence, both personal and political, in Europe at Russia's disposal at the Congress of Berlin, after we had supported and carried through every Russian proposal at the Congress, the result was that in the year after the Congress the

press of Russia, with the permission and encouragement of the Russian Government, blamed first Count Peter Shouvaloff and then German intervention for all the Russian desires that were not fulfilled. In 1878 Russia was not prepared to go to war with England and Austria, while she had missed the moment for occupying Constantinople and the Straits. I was very ill and was only induced by the wish of the Emperor Alexander II, communicated to me by Count P. Shouvaloff, to promote and summon the Congress. Notwithstanding this complete placing of German policy at the service of Russia, feeling in Russia after the Congress was against us as it had not been at any time during the last hundred years, and it culminated finally in the Emperor Alexander's autograph letter to our Emperor of August 15th, 1879, threatening us directly with rupture and war.

My fear that, in spite of the absence of all divergent interests, we had good cause to imagine it possible that Russia might threaten us in our policy, if we relied solely on her friendship, was justified by these facts, just after we had given the most convincing proofs of our readiness to fall in with Russian policy, as far as our own interests allowed us. This happened at a time when the personal friendship of the rulers of these two countries was closer than at any time, and when a Minister was at the head of German affairs, who, from the beginning of his political career, during the Crimean War, the Polish insurrection and the European grouping of 1863, and during the Turkish Balkan War and the Congress, showed unmistakable proofs of his readiness to make German policy harmonise with that of Russia.

After this experience M. de Giers cannot expect a conscientious German colleague to break up and destroy the friendships, which might be ours, if Russia were to cause fresh disturbances in Europe, and all the less, since we are already certain of the enmity of so strong a Power as France, and since the fact is before us that most of the Russian Press, with the sufferance of the Imperial Government, is rousing public opinion in the country to fight Germany, and when the French Government is making direct overtures to us through its Foreign Minister at the same moment that Russian overtures are being made in Paris in the sense of a joint anti-German policy.

If M. de Giers will be so good as to realise all these circumstances, he will find that he cannot fairly demand of us that we go further than hitherto in supporting Russia's wishes in Vienna, that is to say than energetic, but friendly mediation and argument in support. Beyond this there remains only threatening, which we refuse to do, when dealing with Austria. In my Memorandum of December 2nd I expressed my conviction that according to the spirit of existing Treaties Bulgaria should fall

within the sphere of Russia. This opinion of ours is known in Vienna, and I am sure that there are no vital Austro-Hungarian interests to oppose to it. Up till September, 1885, Austrian policy accepted our attitude. His Majesty the Emperor will continue to adhere to it and to second the Russian efforts to realise it with all diplomatic support. But I did not expect that the measure of this support would fail to satisfy M. de Giers, seeing that he must have been informed by you of all the influence we have brought to bear in Vienna for a long time past. That he is not satisfied is clear to me from the fact that the only result of our adhesion in principle to Russia's policy in Bulgaria, as shown in my Memorandum of December 2nd, has been a demand to increase our pressure on Austria. This, in my opinion, has been for some time past as strong as is possible between Powers, who wish to remain friendly.

We also count on the friendship of Russia, but we have never made any demands on her and believe that we must before all pursue a German policy and can only under certain circumstances count on benevolent passivity and diplomatic assistance. We lack this entirely in the French question, which is the one lying nearest our heart. But so far I have never contemplated expressing a wish to M. de Giers that Russia should exercise a calming pressure on France, not in favour of any German influence outside our own frontiers, but merely to secure us against fresh unjust attacks, such as that of 1870.<sup>1</sup>

And even so, such Russian pressure in Paris would not be an equivalent for German pressure in Vienna, for Russia's relations with France are not strengthened by historic tradition or near neighbourhood. In spite of all her social relations with France, Russia has hitherto had only hostile impulses against her—in 1812, in the Crimean War of 1854, and the Polish Revolt of 1861–3; whereas German Russian relations have ever since the Seven Years War been thoroughly friendly and benevolent with the exception of the period since 1879, directly after we had proved our good will towards Russia quite generously and with complete disinterestedness in the questions that lay before us.

<sup>1</sup> *German Note.*<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to the Emperor written on August 31st, 1879, Prince Bismarck stated that in November, 1876, he had tried to sound Prince Gortchakoff, as to whether Russia, in return for active support for her Eastern policy, would guarantee Germany in the possession of Alsace-Lorraine. Gortchakoff at once refused to consider this. A letter from Count Herbert Bismarck to his brother, William (August 24th, 1879), states that Bismarck gave oral instructions to the Ambassador, Schweinitz, whilst on a visit at Varzin in October, 1876, to discuss with Gortchakoff the idea of a Treaty of mutual alliance and guarantee. (Vol. II, p. 80.)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 33.



I request you to make the points raised in this very confidential paper a subject for discussion with M. de Giers, as soon as you find an opportunity, and to report to me the views of my Russian friend.

The Chancellor requests to have a draft in the sense of the above translated into French. He also wishes to have the translation sent here for inspection.

A separate confidential letter should inform General von Schweinitz, that His Highness prepared the despatch in such detail because he hoped that M. de Giers would ask for a copy of it to show elsewhere. If the Minister made this request, the Ambassador was empowered to grant it.

Postscript.

The Chancellor requests you to speak to Count Shouvaloff also in the sense of the first part of the foregoing document, concerning our action in Bulgaria.

*German Note.*

On December 9th, 1886, Colonel Count von Wedel, Military Attaché in Vienna, had an Audience with the Emperor Francis Joseph. The latter complained that Germany was playing Russia's game in the Bulgarian question and refusing to consider ever taking active part in a war against Russia. Prince Bismarck's numerous notes in the margin of this report declared that it was natural that Germany should turn her attention mainly to the West, rather than the East; there was no reason for making war on Russia—'We wish to prevent it.'

#### V. 149

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE,  
AT FRIEDRICHSRUH, *December 16th, 1886*

The Chancellor desires that the reply of Prince Reuss, which should also be communicated to Count Wedel, be framed in accordance with his marginal notes. It should be added that the Emperor Francis Joseph seems greatly to underestimate the danger of a war with France and the strength of the French forces. The French Army is now stronger than ours. To defend ourselves with certainty of success, we should need our full strength on the Rhine, and should be glad if that was enough. We look on war with France as comparatively near, and wish, if possible, to avoid a Russian war simultaneously. It would be no proof of good-will, if Austria paid so little attention to the difficult situation in which we should be with France at our throat, and in spite of the great probability of a French war, she reproached us, because we sought to avoid a war with Russia. The interests of both of us demand that we mutually help each other, supposing either of us is attacked, but at the same time to do all in our power to prevent such an event-

ality. In our estimate of the fighting forces, a simultaneous struggle of the German and Austrian Empires against France and Russia would be a difficult and indeed an unequal one, and the Bulgarian question contains absolutely no equivalent for the sacrifices that the struggle would demand. Moreover, the 1878 Agreements and the actual situation up till September, 1885, respecting Bulgaria, were in Russia's favour, and the Revolution in Philippopolis supplied no new grounds for a Treaty. Unfortunately we could gain no acceptance for our proposal of a line of demarkation either in Vienna or St. Petersburg. But that did not prevent our continuing to regard our view as the correct one, and to shape our policy in accordance with it.

If the Austrian Emperor gives an opportunity, both gentlemen should speak to His Majesty in the sense of the above.

## CHAPTER XX

### NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN ENTENTE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND ITALY, 1887

[The motives of the German Government for favouring an Entente between England and Italy were set out in a Memorandum written by Count Herbert Bismarck on December 27th, 1886.

The Chancellor desired to impress on the Italian Government the necessity of strengthening its Army against the chance of war in Europe. He found Italy, once provided with an ally, all too ready to do so. Italian opinion was irritated and alarmed by the French invasion and occupation of Tunis in 1881. They hoped now to secure the neighbouring coast of Tripoli, but feared that the French would snatch that also.

At the Berlin Congress the French made it clear that they had marked Tunis for their own (see pp. 81, 94), and England was too preoccupied with the subject of Egypt to feel justified in bringing any objection against the French plans in the Mediterranean.]

The following is an extract from Count Herbert Bismarck's Memorandum mentioned above:

#### IV. 224-5

Count Launay's (Italian Ambassador in Berlin) attention should be called quite confidentially to the fact that Italy's military significance would become much more important and possess an altogether different value, if she were allied with England or united with her for common action. The relations between England and France are not good, there being many causes for bitterness on both sides, and many people—e.g. the Paris Rothschilds—hold that the next European war will be between England and France. At this moment England would therefore probably be willing to give greater expression to the traditional close friendship with Italy, who ought to make definite overtures in this direction to Lord Salisbury.

If allied to England, Italy would not only be protected against a landing by the French, but might even effect a successful landing in the neighbourhood of Marseilles under the protection of the British Fleet. In fact, to complete the picture and to bring Italy to the front in accordance with her deserts, an alliance with England, or at any rate, the closest possible association with her is urgently desirable. . . .

IV. 297

COUNT HATZFELDT, IN LONDON, TO THE GERMAN  
FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 31st, 1887*

Count Corti (Italian Ambassador in London) has just received instructions to make definite overtures here and to put himself in communication with me. He is to see Lord Salisbury to-morrow, read to him Count Robilant's despatch (Italian Foreign Minister) and deliver an Aide Memoire, containing proposals for an understanding.

The Italian Ambassador requests me to support his efforts.

*Remark by BISMARCK :*

*' We must first know what it is all about. We always desire and can offer general encouragement in a mere rapprochement or friendship between England and Italy, but can we give any assistance? We must know the details in order to support them.'*

IV. 297

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*February 2nd, 1887*

Lord Salisbury has informed the Italian Ambassador that he must naturally consult his colleagues before giving a decisive answer. He said in advance that a formal treaty, which could not be withheld from the knowledge of Parliament, was out of the question. Moreover, the agreement must not in any respect be directed against Austria, to whom England was bound by their common policy. For the rest, he recognised the identity of British and Italian interests in the East and the Mediterranean, and was thus personally greatly inclined to enter into negotiations.

As regards Austria, Count Corti declared decisively that Italy only desires to act in accordance with Austrian interests. As for France, whose special mention struck Lord Salisbury, he said that for the moment there is nothing in dispute between her and Italy, but that she, Italy, has never forgotten Tunis.

The Italian Ambassador is on the whole pleased at this communication, the secrecy of which is impressed upon him, and has reported to Rome in this sense. I shall probably be seeing Lord Salisbury to-morrow. (BISMARCK : *' Please inform Lord Salisbury confidentially that we rejoice at any rapprochement between the two Governments, both friendly to us, of England and Italy, and regard it as a pledge of peace. I spoke yesterday in the same sense to Sir Edward Malet.'*)

## IV. 298

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*February 3rd, 1887*

*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury spoke to me in terms similar to those used to Count Corti. He discussed the proposal in Cabinet to-day, and there is a general opinion that British interests in the Mediterranean and the East are in agreement with those of Italy. It is, however, recognised that there will be great difficulties with Parliament and public opinion in promising beforehand British support, in the event of Italy making an attack on France, in the hope of recovering Nice and Savoy. (BISMARCK : '*Not contemplated.*') )

It is here that the principal difficulty exists for Lord Salisbury, whose own sympathies favour a rapprochement with Italy. He therefore regrets the preciseness of the Italian draft proposal on this point. (BISMARCK : '*Not known here.*') I urgently and confidentially advised him to join with Count Corti in seeking some other formula, acceptable to both parties, before returning a definite answer. For the success of the scheme it is highly important, if Count Robilant shows willingness and instructs Count Corti by telegraph, that the question should be discussed confidentially with the Minister.

Lord Salisbury was somewhat anxious at Count Corti's proposals that the matter should be kept secret from the Austrian Ambassador. I reassured him on this point ; but I think, nevertheless, that some statement on Austria's part, from which he might gather that an understanding between England and Italy would be welcomed in Vienna, would have considerable influence with Lord Salisbury and his colleagues.

## IV. 300

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *February 3rd, 1887*

In connection with your report on the steps taken by Count Corti, I have held a long conversation with the British Ambassador upon which I give you the following information, first, however, remarking that so far I have no knowledge of the details of Count Corti's proposals to Lord Salisbury, and that your to-day's telegram contains the only indication that has reached me.

I requested Sir Edward Malet to assure his Chief that we welcome any rapprochement between England and Italy, because we are convinced, that it would further the certainty of European peace. I regretted to learn by recent information from several sources that, owing to home conditions, Lord Salisbury considers that England should abstain from participation in all foreign

questions. In my opinion such abstention is impossible for a Power such as England, without leading to complete isolation, thus encouraging and making possible combinations of all other Powers, in which England would be entirely ignored, since her policy of abstention would hinder her from opposing or furthering the interests of the other Powers. I referred to our own case, as an instance, and showed that if England had abstained from all participation in European politics, we should have had no reason for refusing to encourage the French desires in Egypt, or those of the Russians in the East, however ambitious they might have been. Our interests lay in maintaining peace with these two neighbouring Powers. If we were able to count on England's support and assertion of power in upholding the Treaties and the status quo, as happened at the time of the Crimean War, we should, when confronted by the selfish desires of France or Russia, have been able to take up a position different from that indicated if England showed herself completely aloof from our interests. These interests were not endangered by the presence of France in Egypt or of Russia in Constantinople. We had *nothing to gain by a war with either of these two neighbours* of ours, and if we could buy peace by allowing them freedom of action in spheres which did not affect us, and had even perhaps more or less favourably encouraged them, it would merely have been fulfilling the Government's duty in preserving Germany's peace. If it was in our power to keep the peace with France by concessions regarding Egypt, or to ensure Russia's friendship in the event of war with France by favouring the schemes of Russia in Constantinople, I should have been sorry to attain such ends at the expense of a friendly sovereign, such as the Sultan. It is, however, not Germany's first duty to uphold the Turkish Empire, and it does not form so important a part of our policy as to justify such sacrifices on our part, as would certainly be involved in a war waged simultaneously against France and Russia. In her present condition Austria is hardly strong enough to defend her interests in the Balkans alone against Russia. Italy's friendship would be something towards lessening the inequality and strengthening Austria's confidence in herself. How much more would this be the case, if England was behind Italy, and there was the probability that the British Fleet would support the Italian. Failing this, the superiority of the French Navy will deter the Italians from sharing in the dangers, to which Austria may be exposed. The Italian demand for some acquisition in the Mediterranean—Tripoli, Tunis, Albania—is clearly a lively one and calculated to drive Italy into playing a part, whilst it induces in the other nations merely a desire for peace and the status quo. This Italian passion for acquisition can

always be used in countering the schemes of conquest of other Powers.

I warned Sir Edward Malet that in the present situation our action would be practically limited to holding France in check. If this is true in its full sense, however, it will enable England as well as Italy to enjoy greater freedom of movement, and if these two, combined with Austria, seem likely to be strong enough to prevent peace being disturbed by Russia, and if on the other hand Germany and France so counterbalance each other, that one sword keeps the other in its scabbard, equilibrium and peace are assured in Europe. Both conditions depend on England; but if England slips out of that combination, we should be forced to seek for ourselves other expedients, as indicated above, for the maintenance of peace to the best of our ability.

I repeatedly assured the British Ambassador that we shall not attack France in spite of every Boulangist provocation, and at the same time, with an eye to the British Press, I enquired whether England really believes she has an interest in seeing a war between us and France. Several British papers leave one to imagine it, but I cannot believe it. Sir Edward Malet, also, denied it with fire and conviction and assured me that England never desired war in itself, and even less the overthrow of Germany in a war, for then England would find herself alone, so to speak, with France and Russia on the map of Europe. This conception is perfectly correct, but if England thinks that she can sit still and leave us to settle alone all the Continental questions, there is still the risk that one day, even without the previous ruin of Germany, she may, simply on account of her refusal to take part in European politics, find herself obliged to face in isolation one of the Continental Powers. I consider it necessary in the interests of Germany's safety to seek a rapprochement either with England, or Russia, if the combination, outlined above, fails to secure peace and equilibrium.

Your Excellency will please not understand the above as a commission to make overtures to Lord Salisbury, but merely for your own correct information and as a guide for use when occasion serves. I assume that Sir Edward Malet will have reported yesterday to Lord Salisbury the sense of all that I have said to him

#### IV. 303

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*February 5th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury has just informed Count Corti that he can enter into the understanding, if the condition binding him to

support Italy in any attack on France is deleted.<sup>1</sup> (BISMARCK : 'Clearly.')

Count Corti is delighted at this and is telegraphing in this sense to Rome.

In a very confidential conversation Lord Salisbury has declared to me that he admits the accuracy of Your Highness's remarks to Sir Edward Malet on the most desirable grouping of the Powers, including England. He merely enquires whether England could then also count on our continued support in respect of Egypt. (BISMARCK : 'Yes.') The plan laid down here to-day regarding Egypt runs, barring certain reservations, as follows : Withdrawal of the British troops in about five years ; Egypt to be neutralised under British supervision ; England to have the right to renew her occupation temporarily in the event of internal disturbances or attacks from outside ; the higher military appointments in the Egyptian Army to be in British hands. (BISMARCK : 'We have no objection.')

The Minister requested me to draw Your Highness's attention to Morocco. He added quite confidentially that any further serious extension of French action in those parts would in his eyes constitute a *casus belli* for England. (BISMARCK : 'Respondeatur that Spain thinks the same, or at least says so.')

#### IV. 304

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *February 6th, 1887*  
*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury's doubts in regard to the Italian suggestions, apart from the internal difficulties and the attention that must be paid to the parliamentary situation were as follows :

1. The anxiety lest the proposals, which were to be kept secret from the Austrian Ambassador, might clash with any of Austria's interests. The Minister is now apparently reassured on this point.

2. The impossibility of concluding an alliance without consent of Parliament, and seeing that this may at present be hard to obtain, the need of clothing any understanding in a form which would allow the Government at Question time to deny provisionally the existence of any alliance. Count Corti accepts this as a reasonable objection and has defended it in Rome, and Count Robilant telegraphed on the 4th that he is indifferent as to the form of the understanding. •

3. Article IV of the Italian Promemoria, which states in plain terms the obligation of reciprocal support in any war against France.

<sup>1</sup> Art. IV of the Italian Promemoria, see p. 292.



From the first Count Corti had the gravest doubts regarding this draft and would rather have suppressed or essentially modified it. Lord Salisbury declared to him also, as was to be expected, that he could not bind himself in advance to join in any war that Italy might wage against France, especially when it might include a war of aggression for some object as yet unknown. It was all the less possible, since there was always the chance that Count Robilant might be followed at some future date by a less careful and trustworthy statesman. In addition Lord Salisbury, as he had said to me in confidence, relying on other sources of information, considered it not out of the question that the acquisition of Nice and Savoy might be brought up.

Now that Lord Salisbury has indicated the necessity of deleting or modifying this condition, I consider that it is Count Robilant's affair to draft the Article in more general terms, which would still be acceptable here. Count Corti approves of this, and intends, when a modified draft has been forwarded to him for discussion, to direct all his efforts to achieving a satisfactory issue. If I am not mistaken, it is actually to our interest (BISMARCK: '*Not much; the main point for us is in the East.*') that the condition relating to possible complications with France should not disappear altogether, and I have therefore encouraged the Italian Ambassador in his contention.

From his conversation yesterday with the Minister Count Corti received the impression, which I entirely share, that Lord Salisbury has now come to a definite decision with regard to his foreign policy. He considers, moreover, that the rapprochement, even if it does not take the form of an alliance and rests mainly on mutual confidence between individuals, is still of great value, and that Lord Salisbury can be trusted to choose the right moment for carrying out his policy.

#### IV. 305

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *February 6th, 1887*

The form in which Lord Salisbury signified to me, yesterday his agreement with Your Highness's suggestions regarding the grouping of the Powers, if he could count on our continued support for his Egyptian policy, justified the conclusion that the Minister realises his task in joining policies with Austria and Italy and intends to act in this sense, as long as he controls British policy.

The decided character of the obviously considered and deliberate utterances made by him on his own initiative on the basis of Sir Edward Malet's recent reports, suggest to me that he had already obtained the consent of his colleagues at the Cabinet meeting preceding our conversation. I know from his own lips

that yesterday he held a meeting with Mr. Goschen, whose views on Egypt were wavering a few days before, with the express purpose of settling the main features of the plan and of being able to communicate with us.

My impression is that the determining factor for Lord Salisbury was the argument that England's long hesitation in face of European complications, containing a possible menace to her, was bound to force her into a state of isolation, ruinous to her interests.

Again on this occasion he admitted with fervent thanks that in his eyes a friendly Germany was as a protecting bulwark against any French aggression. If, at the same time, he had to deplore the absence, as I had frequently informed him, of any hope of German support in Bulgaria, he was ready to admit that the circumstances justified our attitude on this question, and that the German policy, by reducing France to inactivity, was already of great benefit to Powers possessing interests in the East.

This admission of Lord Salisbury's, just at the moment of deciding on a common policy with Austria and Italy, seems to me highly significant. It justifies our assumption that no demands will be made here upon us in respect of Bulgaria, such as may clash with our Russian policy. But I think it is equally probable from indications given by Lord Salisbury that he will set store by a friendly attitude on our part in Constantinople, particularly on the Egyptian question. (BISMARCK: '*Good.*')

I have told Count Corti nothing of the general import of my conversation with Lord Salisbury, although he has instructions from Rome to keep in touch with me and informs me of everything regarding his special negotiations with England, and I await Your Highness's instructions in the matter.

I must remark that I agree with the opinion of Count Corti, whose keenness of judgment I trust, that affairs here have taken a turn, which, if it is to bear fruit, must be cultivated carefully and without loss of time. But I consider that it will devolve on Your Highness, and not on Italy, so to direct British policy, (BISMARCK: '*How?*') as to be a pledge for the maintenance of European peace.

IV. 306-7

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *February 7th,*  
1887

*Secret.*

With reference to your telegrams of February 5th, I send you a copy of Count Robilant's instructions to Count Corti, of which mention is made in those telegrams.

If England concludes an Entente with Italy on the basis of

the Promemoria, the Chancellor will be highly gratified; but His Highness sees clearly that Lord Salisbury has doubts as to Article IV, because, in his opinion, it is too far-reaching. I hope that Count Corti will succeed in prevailing on his Government to modify the Article in a purely defensive sense. Even if the Article were deleted entirely,—i.e. if no direct mention were made of France—an agreement limited to the other three Articles would mark a great step forward; for we should still be in a position to hold France in check.

It is to be hoped that to-day's Cabinet crisis in Rome will not end in Count Robilant's fall. If this happens and causes the collapse of the Anglo-Italian negotiations, it will still be very desirable for Lord Salisbury not to lose sight of an Entente with Italy and even of an Alliance, for it is quite likely that Italian policy, considering how the Italian Parliament is constituted, will in time veer round again in favour of Count Robilant.

[The foregoing despatch contained two enclosures, both given in the French language. The first was a copy of Count Robilant's instructions to Count Corti, who was to overcome, if possible, the well-known reluctance of British statesmen to take a long view in foreign politics and to induce Lord Salisbury to commit his country to an alliance with Italy, directly avowedly against France and Russia, for an indefinite period.

The second enclosure was the Promemoria, the text of Italy's proposals for the form of the Entente. It runs as follows:]

#### IV. 308-9

#### PROPOSITIONS POUR UNE ENTENTE ENTRE L'ITALIE ET LA GRANDE BRETAGNE

1. Maintenir, autant que possible le statu quo dans la Méditerranée y compris la Mer Adriatique, la Mer Egée et la Mer Noire.—Conséquemment prévenir, et au besoin empêcher tout changement, qui, sous la forme d'annexion, occupation, protectorat ou d'une autre manière quelconque porterait atteinte, au détriment des deux puissances à la situation actuelle.

2. Si le maintien du statu quo devient impossible, faire en sorte qu'il ne se produise une modification quelconque qu'à la suite d'un accord préalable entre les deux puissances.

3. L'Italie est toute prête à appuyer l'œuvre de la Grande Bretagne en Egypte. La Grande Bretagne est, à son tour, disposée à appuyer, envers les envahissements eventuels de la France, l'action de l'Italie sur toute pointe quelconque de la côte nordafricaine, et nommément dans la Tripolitaine et Cyrénaïque.

4. L'Italie serait prête à se ranger à côté de l'Angleterre dans la Méditerranée dans toute guerre que cette puissance pourrait avoir avec la France, à charge de réciprocité, de la part de l'Angleterre, dans toute guerre entre l'Italie et la France.

[In deference to Lord Salisbury's wishes the draft treaty proposals were modified, as follows :

In Clause 3 the words 'envers les envahissements éventuels de la France' were deleted, and the following substituted : 'en cas d'envahissement de la part d'une tierce Puissance'.

The new Clause 4 ran as follows :

4. En général et pour autant que les circonstances le comporteront, l'Italie et l'Angleterre se promettent appui mutuel dans la Méditerranée pour tout différend qui surgirait entre l'une d'elles et une tierce Puissance.]

(See Count Hatzfeldt's despatch of February 10th, 1887.)

#### IV. 309-10

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *February 10th, 1887*

I have received Your Excellency's secret reports of February 6th, and remark that as regards the Egyptian question our relations towards England remain unchanged. Please inform Lord Salisbury that he may count on us in that matter, and that we have no political desires of any sort regarding Egypt.

The last line of the first report fills me with pleasure, and it causes me to hope that the conversations between Lord Salisbury and Count Corti will achieve a practical result. I approve thoroughly of your not having mentioned your conversation with Lord Salisbury to Count Corti and recommend its continuance, if and so long as you do not receive definite permission from Lord Salisbury to communicate his words to the Italian Ambassador. On the final sentence of the second report I will remark that it is certainly my wish to influence British policy in the direction of peace, but your words do not make it quite clear whether you combine with it the intention that we should go beyond what has already been done by us—and in what direction. I see no necessity at present to go outside the line, which I indicated to Malet and in my despatch of February 3rd to Your Excellency. But I will say that I think it sufficient for the present for me to express my considered opinion on the means whereby peace may perhaps be maintained. The presumption, in its favour is that we are the counterweight against France, and that Austria reinforced by England and Italy holds the balance against Russia. Except for France or Russia there is no fear at all that the peace will be disturbed ; so that the balance would be perfect, if we were sure that Austria by herself or with alliances is able to deal with Russia.

It is not immediately necessary for England to bind herself to Italy for action against France. We consider ourselves strong enough to hold France in check, but we should certainly be surer still, if England's sea-power was there to assist us indirectly against France, and to assure us that England and Italy were united, if only in a defensive alliance. I think it natural that

Lord Salisbury hesitates before entering a defensive alliance. This, however, is not at present demanded by these Powers, whose chief object is the maintenance of peace.

The indiscretions, which Your Excellency sees in an article in the *Temps*, have come to my notice also, and my explanation of it is that Lord Salisbury has informed all his colleagues in the Cabinet of the Italian negotiations. Among 16 Cabinet members there are sure to be a few who fail to appreciate the meaning and importance of secrecy. I do not think that anything has got out through Vienna, but that one or other of Lord Salisbury's colleagues has failed to keep the matter to himself.

#### IV. 311-2

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *February 10th, 1887*  
*Secret.*

The draft of the English answer (to the Italian note) is as follows:

*Extract.*

'The statement of Italian policy which is contained in Your Excellency's despatch (of February 12th) has been received by H.M.'s Government with great satisfaction, as it enables them to reciprocate cordially Count Robilant's friendly sentiments and to express their own desire to co-operate generally with the Government of Italy in matters of common interest to the two countries. The character of that co-operation must be decided by them, when the occasion for it arises, according to the circumstances of the case.

'In the interest of peace and of the independence of the territories adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea, Her Majesty's Government wish to act in the closest concert and agreement with that of Italy. Both Powers desire that the shores of the Euxine, the *Ægean*, the Adriatic and the Northern coast of Africa shall remain in the same hands as now. If, owing to some calamitous events, it becomes impossible to maintain the absolute "status quo", both Powers desire that there shall be no extension of the domination of any other Great Power over any portion of those coasts. It will be the earnest desire of H.M.'s Government to give their best co-operation, as hereinbefore expressed, to the Government of Italy in maintaining these cardinal principles of policy.'

As regards the character of the co-operation, the Italian Ambassador applied the expression 'by them' to both Governments. Lord Salisbury indicated to me confidentially that he agreed with this, but that the fact of its being possible to apply the expression also to Her Majesty's Government in the preceding sentence would in the end expose him to attacks in Parliament.

(Cf. Dr. A. F. Pribram, *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914*, I, pp. 95, etc.)

## IV. 313

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*February 13th, 1887*

*Secret.*

In accordance with the despatch of February 10th I visited Lord Salisbury yesterday to make the required communication regarding Egypt to him. He requested me to present his hearty thanks to Your Highness.

In the course of the resulting conversation I was able to refer to the Minister's words, which I reported in my second despatch of February 6th, and to confirm the accuracy of my account of them. Lord Salisbury admitted emphatically that he had spoken in that sense and had recognised that our part must be limited to keeping France in check, and that we should offer him no support in Bulgaria, however keenly he might desire it.

I may, therefore, regard as well-founded the inference expressed in the same report, that we need expect no demands to be made on that point, likely to clash with our Russian policy. I believe that Lord Salisbury is perfectly honest on that point, because he has convinced himself that Germany regards the offering to Russia of no pretext for interfering as an axiom, on which her own security against the menace from France depends. I have no certain evidence that he cherishes the hope that Russia's policy will eventually oblige us, for the sake of European peace and our own security, to turn for support to the group of Powers, whose policy is to oppose the Russian schemes in the East, but I am inclined to assume its probability, for it agrees with the interests of England and with Lord Salisbury's conception of Russian policy.

In the present situation, Lord Salisbury knows that there is no hope of support against Russia in the East, and clearly admits it. But he has the impression, and is, I know, confirmed in it by Count Corti's arguments, that the recent understanding concluded with Italy has led England into nearer relations with Germany and Austria and given expression to a certain community of interests, which would be benefited by the adhesion of England in the interests of peace. I consider, and have indicated the same in my Report mentioned above, that with this consideration Lord Salisbury will value a friendly attitude on our part in Constantinople. Some words that he used to me to-day are significant of the measure of this friendship. He remarked with evident satisfaction that from information received he understood that the German Ambassador in Constantinople had recently shown more reserve. This, if I am not mistaken, is the point which counts with the Minister. He demands no active

support for his policy in Constantinople and knows that it is not to be expected, where it would bring us into conflict with Russia. His wish is for a certain impartial reserve on the part of our representative and that he should not throw the full weight of our influence into the balance against England. Nor should he give the Porte the impression, that an anti-British attitude on its part will be meeting our wishes under any circumstances.

To sum up : Lord Salisbury considers that the advantages, which he hopes for from us as a return for joining the grouping of the Powers which Your Highness regards as desirable, are as follows :

1. Protection against any aggressive French policy.
2. Support for England's plans in Egypt, and also in Constantinople.
3. Impartial reserve by our representative in Constantinople in all other questions, without actual opposition to Russia.

As regards the last, I must observe that, in my opinion, Lord Salisbury's policy is in no way calculated to produce complications with Russia. He desires the greatest possible measure of independence for Bulgaria, because he continues to see in it a certain bar to Russia's further penetration, and also cannot by entire renunciation openly reverse his former policy. He can, therefore, only welcome it, if the Porte, as in reliance on his information he said to me yesterday, ceases to show the same compliance with Russian wishes in Bulgaria as hitherto. But I have no doubt that Lord Salisbury would, for his part, for the sake of peace agree to any solution of the Bulgarian difficulty, which would be agreeable to Vienna.

As regards Your Highness's despatch of February 10th and the question raised in it respecting the line to be observed by us with England, I may say that, in my opinion, the three points, embodying my observation of the British wishes, in no way disagree with the limit indicated by Your Highness as desirable, if the increase of reserve, as reported by Lord Salisbury, lately shown by the Imperial Ambassador in Constantinople in our relations with Russia, might be even further emphasised.

There would be no justification at present, if I may express an opinion, for our overstepping this line, for I think that we should not forget that Lord Salisbury deserves indeed our confidence, and that for the present his position seems to be assured, but that internal difficulties are so great here that doubt as to a longer duration of the present Cabinet cannot be regarded as unconditionally excluded.

But even within this line I am convinced that, without neglecting our own relations, Your Highness can exercise your influence with success in the interests of peace by confidential advice and

expression of your opinion. This influence will be indirectly strengthened by the fact of the understanding with Italy being now completed, and also because Your Highness will be in a position to bring your influence to bear on the British Cabinet's whole attitude through the Italian Government, with which England will be obliged to keep in touch.

#### IV. 315-6

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF  
REUSS, IN VIENNA, *February 16th, 1887*

In order to stimulate Count Kalnoky, Your Serene Highness may inform him, still with a request for strict secrecy, that we have succeeded in bringing about a written agreement between England and Italy, by which each Power binds itself for the purpose of common action for the maintenance of the status quo in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. We have pressed forward this agreement, which was completed in London on the 12th inst., so urgently, principally in order to create a basis on which Austria can depend, supposing she is forced to defend herself. We shall with good hopes of success now urge Salisbury and Robilant to communicate this decision officially to Vienna. Until this is effected, the matter must be kept strictly secret in Vienna. I only tell you this in order to show how great cause Count Kalnoky has to ally himself with Italy, and beg you to communicate it to him, for the moment using great caution. It is no mean feat, our having induced England to engage herself as far as we have.

#### IV. 316

MEMORANDUM TO QUEEN VICTORIA, *February 23rd, 1887*

*Secret.*

By the understanding with Italy England has given the utmost assurance that a Parliamentary State can give, to the effect that in case of war between France and Germany, she would join herself actively to that group of Powers who constituted the police of peace in the East. No English Government can give definite pledges of military or naval co-operation in a future conflict simply because it cannot be sure that Parliament would make such a promise good.

But so far as Lord Salisbury can judge, he has the most confident belief that if the Turkish Empire, and especially Constantinople, was threatened by Russia, England would actively join with Austria and Italy in resisting her. Lord Salisbury is disposed to the same belief, though less confidently, if Russia were to attack Austria without violating Turkish territory. But in



that case it would be difficult for England to give any effective assistance.

*German Note.*

The Memorandum for the Queen of England, the English original of which is not available, and the writer of which cannot be determined, was communicated to the Foreign Office [by Count Radolinski, later Prince Radolin, Hofmarschall of the Crown Prince Frederick William; presumably it emanates from Lord Salisbury.

[The version printed here is a retranslation from the German.]

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE ADHESION OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY TO THE ANGLO-ITALIAN ENTENTE OF 1887

IV. 319

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*February 18th, 1887*

*Secret.*

In accordance with telegraphic instructions the Italian Ambassador has informed Lord Salisbury that Count Robilant is prepared to communicate the secret Treaty to Vienna, if the Prime Minister desires it.

Lord Salisbury has replied that he wishes the substance, but not the text, communicated, but that he would agree to the latter, if Count Robilant considers it necessary. In the meanwhile, and until a reply is received, he will instruct the British Ambassador in Vienna at once by telegraph to communicate the substance.

IV. 319

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*February 24th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Count Kalnoky has been so good as to read me the despatch that he has written to Count Karolyi concerning the Anglo-Italian Agreement, with the object of inspiring the Ambassador's language, and at the same time to stimulate him to more active communication with Lord Salisbury.

This paper commissions the Ambassador to thank the British Premier for the notes in question and to express the liveliest satisfaction at the completion of the Agreement, a document which has the fullest sympathy of the Vienna Cabinet. The Minister refers back to his former words, spoken to the British Ambassador here in the interests of both Empires, and remarks that nothing need stand in the way of a similar agreement between Austria-Hungary and England on the same basis, if circumstances demand it. Count Kalnoky declares finally that, now as ever,

the first concern of the Government of the Emperor Francis Joseph is the maintenance of peace. . . .

The Cabinet here clings to its former declarations. It will not be driven by others into a war with Russia, but it is ready to adhere to the Anglo-Italian arrangements in the event of war being forced upon it by Russia.

Count Kalnoky finds that, since Lord Randolph Churchill's retirement from the Cabinet, Lord Salisbury has returned to his former resolute attitude, and considers it not only a remarkable feat, but also at the same time a great gain, to have successfully induced the British Premier to bind himself to so far-reaching an agreement.

#### IV. 320

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*February 28th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury informs me in strict confidence that yesterday the Austrian Ambassador proposed an exchange of views on the principles of the Anglo-Italian Secret Agreement. The Prime Minister replied that he would consult his colleagues in Cabinet on the following Wednesday and then return an answer.

Personally Lord Salisbury inclines to the opinion that, in spite of the partial dissimilarity between Austria's interests and those of England and Italy, it would be best to propose to Count Kalnoky a simple adherence to the Anglo-Italian understanding, if Count Robilant on his side agrees to this.

#### IV. 321

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*March 5th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury has just informed the Austrian Ambassador that the British Government will rejoice, if Austria will give her adherence to the Anglo-Italian secret Treaty. Count Karolyi, who himself favours this adherence, is reporting on it to Vienna.

Subsequent to his conversation with the Austrian Ambassador Lord Salisbury made known the details of it to Count Corti in strict confidence. The Minister hopes that Count Robilant approves of his proposal to Count Karolyi and will support it in Vienna. If Vienna also is in agreement, Lord Salisbury thinks that an exchange of Notes in confirmation should take place.

## IV. 321

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF  
REUSS, IN VIENNA, *March 6th, 1887*

*Secret.*

The Chancellor requests you to maintain secrecy about the communication (contained in Count Hatzfeldt's telegram of March 5th), as he hopes that the Vienna Cabinet will agree to Lord Salisbury's proposal of its own accord, in which case he thinks it best that we should say nothing about the matter. But if doubts arise in Count Kalnoky as to the usefulness of the agreement suggested by Salisbury, and if he speaks in this sense to you, you will consider yourself empowered to persuade the Count to conclude the Agreement. If Austria should raise difficulties about this British offer, which is so important for Austria's future, it would be a proof that she ill understands her own interests and is relying too much on us. We are not in a position to identify ourselves with Austria in Eastern matters, nor to help her materially in any complications arising in Bulgaria or the Black Sea. Seeing that Lord Salisbury is ready to undertake this, Austria should quickly take him at his word. I think that Count Kalnoky will himself see the point and act accordingly. Therefore the Chancellor wishes, if at all possible, to keep clear of the affair. You will thus interfere only, if you see that the Vienna Cabinet is too short-sighted to recognise its own advantage.

## IV. 323

PRINCE BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
*March 11th, 1887*

*Confidential.*

Our Ambassador in London reports that Lord Salisbury has the impression that Vienna is not hurrying over the secret Agreement, based on an exchange of Notes. Count Karolyi said to him only the day before yesterday: 'There is no danger in delay.'

Without desiring directly to influence the decisions of the Vienna Cabinet, I should like to remind them that, if the English are kept in suspense by Austria, or if the negotiations between Vienna and London lead to nothing, they will take steps to draw nearer to the independent nations of the Balkan Peninsula, and especially to Greece; and all the more certainly, if the Porte continues to follow the lead of Russia. They will then at once attempt to harass the Porte indirectly by exciting the cupidity of the Greeks and stirring up trouble in Bulgaria. The Greeks would be encouraged in the direction of their aspirations, which run contrary to the interests of Austria and give rise, in the event of the break-up of the Turkish Empire, to claims of succession, which

Austria cannot endorse. It is highly probable that, if England needs support in the East and fails to find it in Austria, she will seek it in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and even Montenegro.

These dangers would be allayed by acceptance of the Agreement proposed by England, which would also probably exercise an attractive influence on the Porte.

The foregoing suggestions will only be applicable, if we may assume that Austria is determined to take no steps against a Russian advance into Bulgaria, but instead, passively to allow it to happen. That would, as Your Excellency knows, in my opinion be the most convenient and desirable prospect for us; in this case Count Karolyi's saying would be correct that there is no need to hurry in coming to an understanding with England. The Count knows that we have always recommended reserve on the part of Austria in the event of Russia's entering Bulgaria. The attitude of Hungary last autumn has made me uncertain whether Count Kalnoky will be able to accept a Russian occupation of Bulgaria quietly, and it appears to me that, if this anxiety of mine is well-founded, an Austrian agreement with England, with the inclusion of Italy, will be a commendable measure of precaution. I keep before me only the desire to see Austria strengthened, both for struggles *extra casum nostri fœderis*, and also, in view of our obligations in respect of France, in *casu fœderis*. We shall be all the better pleased, if Austria quietly allows the occupation of Bulgaria by Russia; but if she does not like it, it will be to her advantage to have the help of England in the background. But even if England's military situation prevents her from offering this help at once, her prestige, in combination with Italy, will act so strongly in Constantinople, as to form a counter-weight which will deter Russia from any sort of provocative action. If, at the same time, France is held in check by us, such a combination will result in a balance of power which for us will be the best pledge of peace.

#### IV. 324-5

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*March 15th, 1887*

*Secret.*

The secret despatch of March 6th has arrived in my hands.

After his return from Pesth Count Kalnoky read me some reports from London, in which Count Karolyi mentions the good reception accorded to his overtures by the British Premier, following on the secret Notes exchanged between England and Italy, communicated here by Lord Salisbury.

(The reference is to the amended proposals contained in the Italian Note of February 12th, p. 294 et seq.)

The latter points out that these agreements signify no alliance for war, but only put on record the identity of principles according to which the two Governments would enter into a military alliance in one of the foreseen contingencies. Also that England has promised no material help to Italy, as this is impossible without consent of Parliament.

Likewise Lord Salisbury considers that the relation that he desires towards Austria is an Alliance of principle, and rejoices to find Count Kalnoky in agreement with his views.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador has since telegraphed that Lord Salisbury has proposed to him in more definite terms that he should give his adherence to the Anglo-Italian Agreement.

Count Kalnoky declared to me that he would not hesitate for a moment to undertake such an exchange of Notes, based on identical principles. As the wording of the Notes in question did not agree, the Vienna Note also would not read quite the same. For the rest, he intended to instruct Count Karolyi, as soon as he had obtained the Emperor Francis Joseph's consent to his proposals, to discuss the matter with the British Prime Minister and to meet his wishes. As I have already reported by telegraph, an instruction was despatched from here to Count Karolyi on March 12th, commissioning him to discuss the text of the Note with Lord Salisbury and to settle how Austria-Hungary shall signify her adherence to the Notes exchanged between England and Italy.

Count Kalnoky was so good as to read this instruction to me to-day. It declares agreement with the principles expressed in those Notes . . . and merely remarks that Austria's interests in the Mediterranean question are but small.

In it Count Kalnoky clings to the text of the telegram in which Lord Salisbury made his first communication of that exchange of Notes to the Cabinet here,<sup>1</sup> and which expressed the view that the British Cabinet entertained no doubt of Austria's adherence to those principles even though of course she did not possess equal interests in the Mediterranean with that Power, her own lying more in the East.

It only remains for the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to forward here for ratification the agreed text of the Note, which he is instructed to do by telegram.

Under these circumstances, and as Count Kalnoky signified to me himself his adhesion to it on March 14th as a settled thing, I have decided to make no further use of Your Highness's despatch of March 11th, which reached me on the 14th.

I have followed the instructions sent me for the handling of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Prince Bismarck's despatch of March 11th.

this affair most strictly, so as not to leave room for the surmise that Your Highness has played a hand in it.

However, I do not fail to repeat from time to time how useful it would be, if Austria would adopt an attitude of reserve in the event of a future Russian advance into Bulgaria, but I fear that in this case Count Kalnoky will be unable to accept such an event passively. The Minister believes, moreover, that the Russian Emperor would not be permitted to decide on any such action.

#### IV. 326

COUNT HATZFELDT TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,

*March 17th, 1887*

*Private letter.*

Yesterday after dinner at Salisbury's I found an opportunity for a confidential conversation. He began by telling me that he had news from Bulgaria, this time not from the representative at Sofia (Sir Frank Lascelles), which sounded rather disquieting. Owing to the apathy of Europe, the Regents appeared to be taking refuge in desperate measures. On my asking what was meant by desperate measures, he said that they seemed to be contemplating a rising in Macedonia, which in consideration of the Porte he would consider a very serious mistake,—and also to be procuring the re-election of Prince Alexander.

Although all this sounds improbable in view of Thielmann's recent reports (German Consul-General and Representative at Sofia), I feel it my duty to pass it on, as Salisbury considers the sources of his information fairly reliable. He did not name them.

He treated as settled last evening the entrance of Austria into the Anglo-Italian Agreement, and said that it would be formally completed to-day or to-morrow. He assured me that Austria had demanded neither additional clauses nor any explanation regarding the East. In to-day's Cabinet the text of the Note to Count Karolyi was to be settled and then forwarded to him. All the latter would then have to do would be to telegraph to Vienna for leave to accept.

A sentence of Salisbury's seemed significant and gave me the impression that, as soon as all is settled with Vienna, he will pursue the notion of suggesting now a common attitude and language of all three Powers in all questions that may arise, particularly in respect of the East. This will presuppose an exchange of Notes between the three Cabinets in every single case. I shall naturally watch the matter here, and in Vienna and Rome likewise they can be ascertaining whether Salisbury is seeking to introduce these ideas there. (BISMARCK: '*I hope so.*')

Following a remark of his that Russia was making great efforts to draw the Sultan to her side, we turned to Turkey, and

he again mentioned the possibility of the Dardanelles being closed. I took this opportunity of saying that, as I knew, the Sultan was under a treaty obligation, but my remark was at first met with emphatic denial. He repeated several times that this obligation had been removed, and only when I refused to alter my opinion, did he express his intention to ascertain the true state of the case from documents, in case he might possibly be mistaken after all. At the same time, he seemed by no means to renounce the idea of forcing the Dardanelles with the English fleet, for, as he said repeatedly, if matters were to take a serious turn, it might be possible to passer par surprise from the base at Malta.

Later in our conversation, however, it became clear that he had the idea of coming, before everything else, to a complete understanding with the Sultan by an agreement over Egypt. He said that he meant this very day to speak seriously to Goschen and to persuade him to grant financial concessions. (He spoke of 'guarantees', and I presume that the question of the Sultan's tribute will occupy a prominent place.) Salisbury did not deny, however, that the matter had a very serious aspect owing to difficulties at home and in Parliament. Financial demands in Parliament for Egypt might easily cost the Government several votes, which it could not spare just now, owing to the necessity of pressing forward its Irish policy.

Salisbury spoke thus with great frankness and quite unprompted by me, and I do not doubt that he will as frankly inform me shortly of the result of his conversation with Goschen.

I took this opportunity to ask him what he heard from Greece, and what the attitude there was towards the possible complications in the East. He replied that Tricoupi (the Greek Prime Minister) was always sending word that the Sultan had concluded an alliance with Russia,—evidently in the hope of engaging him against Turkey. He disbelieved it and did not allow it to influence him.

I should add that the Turkish Ambassador, whom I have known well for some years, has several times expressed anxiety in strict confidence that, in the Agreements between Austria, Italy and ourselves over certain Turkish Provinces (Tripoli in particular), concessions may have been promised to Italy. I naturally answered that I knew nothing of these treaties and disbelieve what is said of them. But my impression is that the question comes not from Rustem (Turkish Ambassador in London) but from the Sultan himself, who seems to be suffering great anxiety. It should be to the interest of those Powers, namely Italy, Austria and England, who do not wish Turkey to fall into the arms of Russia, to prevent such fears from taking root.

Last evening Lord Salisbury mentioned the *démarches*



recently made by the Russian Government in Paris on the subject of Bulgaria. He said : ' Il ne s'agissait pas seulement de savoir ce que le gouvernement français penserait d'une occupation russe, mais de la question si la France voulait agir de son côté dans ce cas.'

#### IV. 328-9

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*March 18th, 1887*

#### *Cipher telegram.*

Count Karolyi informs me in confidence that the draft of the British Note, the text of which has been telegraphed to Vienna, is very satisfactory as regards the East, as it goes even further than the British Note addressed to the Italian Ambassador.

The latter Note only mentions the 'coasts', whilst the one for Austria deals with the 'regions'; that is to say, it covers the whole Eastern question, if we may reckon on England's honesty.

[The Notes exchanged between Lord Salisbury and Count Karolyi on March 23rd, 1887, were written respectively in English and French. They are given in full in Pribram's *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary*, 1879-1914, Vol. I, p. 98.

They embody the points of agreement and difference, which are displayed in the correspondence preceding them. The Austrians claim to have less direct interests in the Mediterranean than Lord Salisbury ascribes to them, and Lord Salisbury insists that the character of the co-operation must be decided, only when the need for such co-operation arises. Otherwise, both Notes agree that the maintenance of the status quo in the Mediterranean and the East and the prevention of aggression by any other Power are the common policy of England, Austria-Hungary and Italy.]

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE BULGARIAN CRISIS, 1886

#### THE ENTENTE BETWEEN ENGLAND, ITALY AND AUSTRIA, 1887-8 (1)

[In September, 1885, Prince Alexander of Bulgaria accepted the invitation of the notables of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia to unite in his own person the overlordship of the two sections of Bulgaria, thus contravening the Treaty of Berlin.]

V. 13

*German Note.*

At Russia's suggestion the Ambassadors at Constantinople were called in to settle the question of Eastern Roumelia.

[Austria and England (in the person of Sir William White) supported Prince Alexander, whilst Russia was for his deposition.]

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE EMPEROR WILLIAM, *October 9th, 1885*

*Extract.*

The overmastering desire of the Emperor Alexander, even though toned down by M. de Giers, is evidently to get rid altogether of the Prince of Bulgaria. I have recommended M. de Giers to let this be *cura posterior* for a time, since a simple return to the *status quo ante* is complicated and prejudiced by this question of personalities. I reminded him that England, even more decidedly than Austria, would oppose Prince Battenberg's deposition, and that an understanding with Austria was indicated, in order to prevent her solidarity with England becoming even closer. It would be relaxed if the Prince were not now attacked; the situation was complicated enough without it. . . .

We ought to keep alive in the Russians the impression that England is behind the Austrian attitude and is pursuing an anti-Russian and pro-Battenberg policy, in order to incline her towards concessions in the interests of Austria.

V. 166

BERNHARD VON BÜLOW, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN  
ST. PETERSBURG, TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 14th, 1887*

*Extract.*

M. de Giers said to me :

. . . The Grand Visir is entirely in the hands of the British

Ambassador. 'White est très-fort, il faut rendre justice à ce gaillard. Ce qu'il parvient à faire est d'autant plus remarquable, qu'il n'a derrière lui qu'un gouvernement faible.'

[On July 3rd, 1887, Prince Ferdinand of Coburg was elected Prince of Bulgaria by the Grand Sobranye at Tirnovo. This action was highly displeasing to Russia. Prince Bismarck refused to recognise it for the present, and most of the Powers followed his example.]

#### V. 187

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, *July 8th, 1887*

##### *Extract.*

As regards the election of the Prince of Koburg at Tirnovo, His Highness requests you to telegraph to General von Schweinitz (Ambassador at St. Petersburg) that, if the subject arises, he shall declare that, on each occasion when this candidature was suggested to him, the Chancellor absolutely refused to support it. The Chancellor would urge His Majesty to follow the attitude of Russia towards this election, and to make no pronouncement on it ourselves, until Russia shall have taken up a definite position with regard to it.

#### IV. 335

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *August 3rd, 1887*

##### *Secret.*

In the course of a confidential conversation with Lord Salisbury yesterday, in which I took the opportunity of discussing with him the essential points in the latest despatches from England on the subject of Bulgarian affairs and the Egyptian Convention,<sup>1</sup> the Minister broke in and spoke approximately as follows:

'Je voudrais vous faire une question tout à fait confidentielle, mais je ne sais pas si vous pourrez me répondre. Pour m'exprimer plus exactement, ce n'est pas une question que je fais, mais je voudrais sonder ce que le Chancelier pense sur un point très important.'

With this preface Lord Salisbury took pains to develop the idea, that, as affairs were shaping, the real and dangerous rival of England, as well as of Germany, was not Russia, but France. All the signs pointed decidedly to the fact that Russia was quite determined to abstain from all action, until the ever menacing conflict broke out between Germany and France. (BISMARCK: '*French and British policy are again expecting trouble between us and Russia, and British and Russian policy, as well, are waiting for us to engage France.*') This policy of the Russian Government, on whose assistance France (rightly or wrongly) reckons for the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 245.

decisive moment, would encourage French hostility against Germany, as well as against England, and herein lay the real danger to peace much more than in Russia's aggressive schemes in the East.

Having mentioned shortly the recent understanding arrived at in St. Petersburg in regard to the Afghan Boundary,<sup>1</sup> which had removed a point of difference between England and Russia, the Minister turned to Turkey. I must here remark that Lord Salisbury, no doubt with intention, does not always make his meaning quite clear, and in delicate matters uses round-about phrases, thus leaving the other party to guess his drift. Although he is franker with me than with any other foreign Representative, he sometimes wanders off into this method, and I must add that yesterday it was not quite easy to follow the indirect course of his thought. Lord Salisbury went in for generalities about Turkey also, at first allowing merely a criticism of Turkish conditions and the Sultan's personality to appear. It was only gradually that the exact meaning of these suggestions was evident, when he said that in time conditions as they are in Turkey would become intolerable to Europe. (BISMARCK: '*Not to us.*')

In connection with these words, which can only mean (BISMARCK: '?') that in certain circumstances England could and would leave the Sultan to his fate, (BISMARCK: '?') the Minister reminded me that at an earlier date Lord Randolph Churchill had argued that England possessed no such essential interests in the Bosphorus (BISMARCK: '!') as to justify a war in defence of them. (BISMARCK: '*We possess even less.*')

Then followed some general reflections on the internal situation in England, which might seem to make '*un nouveau départ*' in foreign policy advisable, if and in so far as this could be brought into harmony with other capital interests and also with Your Highness's views. The Minister's definition of these interests was his conviction that on no account must any injury to Austria be involved by this new direction of foreign policy. He repeated with emphasis more than once that any reduction of the power of Austria must be altogether ruled out, and that the Austrian Government, of whose views as to a compromise with Russia in the East he was ignorant, must be exposed to no embarrassment whatever in this respect.

The Minister weakened his argument by remarking again that perhaps the whole question (BISMARCK: '*Which ?*') was not yet ripe and that further developments were still to be awaited.

At the close of our conversation Lord Salisbury pressed the request that Your Highness would treat it as absolutely secret and meant for Your Highness alone. He added the following

<sup>1</sup> July 22nd, 1887. Cf. p. 195 et seq.

words : ' Vous verrez si vous pouvez ensuite me donner une réponse du Chancelier ou non. (BISMARCK : '*To what question ? I can find none in the text.*') J'en serais très heureux, car je ne puis rien faire sans savoir ce qu'il pense. S'il ne croit pas pouvoir répondre, eh bien, vous me direz rien. Du reste, je ne suis pas fixé moi-même sur la question et il s'agit seulement d'une idée qui n'est peut-être n'est pas encore mûre.' (BISMARCK : '*And not even an idea.*')

My impression of this conversation is that, although Lord Salisbury informs me that the life of his Cabinet is not threatened and that the continued support of the Liberal Unionists is assured to him, yet this new development in his foreign policy, contradicting as it does all his former opinions, is really influenced by reasons of domestic and parliamentary policy. I think it not unlikely that a great part is played by his consideration for Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, and perhaps even for Lord Randolph Churchill.

The request to keep our conversation absolutely secret may be partially explained by the fact that the Minister has not yet prepared Her Majesty the Queen for the possibility of such a change, and that he fears that Her Majesty may not altogether approve of it.

If I may offer an opinion—it would certainly be greatly to England's advantage, if an understanding between England and Russia over Eastern affairs caused France to realise that she cannot any longer count on Russian support against this country. On the other hand, I am not in a position to judge whether a corresponding advantage with regard to France would accrue to Germany out of it. I do not think we need England, in order to isolate France, but that we can accomplish this object independently in St. Petersburg, in so far, at least, as this is reconcilable with our relations towards Austria. If I am not mistaken, the change of British policy, that is in question, would only be of real benefit to us, if England simultaneously promised to join with us in opposing any future attacks by France.

I think that for British interests there is a near danger that any change involving the removal of every effective counterweight against Russian aggression in the East would soon prove a shortsighted and in the long run ruinous policy.

#### IV. 338

PRINCE BISMARCK, VARZIN, TO COUNT HATZFELDT,  
*August 8th, 1887*

*Secret.*

I cannot distinguish in your Report of August 3rd any question of Lord Salisbury's that I am capable of answering,

or at any rate only in general, as to whether a rapprochement of England to Russia seems to me advisable. Speaking generally, I can agree to it. A good understanding between England and Russia is naturally welcome to us, for we do not expect that either of the Powers would exploit any agreement, that they may conclude together, against us. Neither possesses interests prompting her to an anti-German policy. We are and wish to remain friendly with both, and, moreover, have no fears that their love for each other will be stronger than that of each of them for us. Whether such an understanding will be useful to England depends entirely on the price that England will have to pay for Russian friendship. If that were to involve desertion of Austria, Austrian policy might perhaps find itself obliged to enter into competition with England for Russia's favour. In any case England would certainly lose the benefit of Austria's supervision of affairs in the East, and also, as a result of this, every hope of developing the strength of Turkey in the service of British policy. Turkey would become dependent either on Russia alone or on a Russo-Austrian combination, and would lose the power of working with England.

We possess in Oriental Turkey fewer interests even than England and cannot risk the peace and power of the German Empire in schemes for Austrian expansion in this direction. But if Austria has to count on our support only when on the defensive, and not at all on England's on account of her friendship with Russia—if, owing to England's Russian policy, Austria also loses the assurance of her existing rapprochement with Italy, there is nothing left for her but to come to a direct understanding with Russia in the sense of her policy of last century and to accept whatever comes to her. We also should have no interest in opposing this development of affairs so long as it involved no force being used against Austria.

The result would be merely another Three-Emperor-Alliance on a different basis, strengthened by the need, felt by the three Imperial Monarchies for union against the advance of Social and Political Democracy, in defence against the method followed by France, and, I may now add, in recent times, by England, of allowing foreign policy to be controlled by changing Parliamentary majorities and the Press.

If a possibility offered of reaching an understanding, not only between England and Russia, but between England, Russia and Austria, I should gladly lend my assistance to its preparation and realisation. But we should take no part in an understanding between England and Russia at the expense and against the interests of Austria.

I do not think an Agreement in this sense an impossibility,

if England will seize the initiative. On this latter assumption I think that the addition of Italy might be obtained. The key to solve the problem lies in the Bulgarian question. We have not yet succeeded in inducing Austria and Russia to agree as to the delimitation of their interests; but we hold fast, as a guide for German policy, to the line which we proposed for an understanding between Austria and Russia, which means that in Bulgarian affairs we side with Russia, in Serbian with Austria and in Egyptian affairs with England. We have never hitherto had occasion to form hard and fast views outside these three points. With regard to these three individual questions, so far as they have hitherto become practical, we have never had to keep our views on Serbia and Egypt (nor our intention to act upon them) secret from the Russian Cabinet, nor those on Bulgaria from the Austrian Cabinet.

The way for England to an understanding with the Russian Emperor would just now be found more easily in Bulgaria than in Asia. Russia would at this moment be especially grateful for any support in the Bulgarian question, which has gone so badly. If England would meet Russian wishes regarding Bulgaria, which are to remove the present regency and to appoint a Russian general (Ernroth, perhaps) as Governor or Regent, I believe that representations made by England and Germany in Vienna would succeed in obtaining even Austria's consent to this concession, which in view of Hungarian policy would not be a small one, so that by this means an understanding might perhaps be arrived at between the three Emperors and England, if England would consent to the Russian plans in Bulgaria.

*German Note.*

Prince Bismarck had sent his son, Herbert, to England in May for the purpose of introducing this suggestion to the British Government.

Such a combination might react mischievously on Italian policy, if it was completed without Italy's knowledge and agreement. Her sensibilities thus injured might so strengthen the forces of Republicanism in the country as to drive her into the arms of France. A means of neutralising Italy and of bringing her into the understanding between the Powers may be found in the Abyssinian question, or in other directions, according to circumstances. I do not consider this task hopeless.

If an agreement were successfully concluded between the three Emperors, England and Italy, to the exclusion of France, thus for a time removing all danger to peace between these five Powers, it would at the same time remove the danger of war which threatens the peace of Europe from the side of France,

as it is impossible to foresee when an explosion may take place there.

France is the most bellicose State in Europe, and her isolation would assure European peace.

I agree with Your Excellency that Lord Salisbury's home policy may have largely to do with the suggestion mentioned in your report of August 3rd. I have often expressed my opinion that my English colleague possesses no more powerful instrument for the control of his country's home policy than the initiation of some action abroad, which would certain drag the internal policy of England in its wake. Such action need not be of warlike character; it could be diplomatic only, and it would react upon internal politics all the more, if it demonstrated that the British Cabinet was playing a leading part in foreign politics. I should be ready, if the idea occurs to Lord Salisbury, to support such action by advice and co-operation and I imagine it taking the following form. Lord Salisbury might seize an occasion arising out of the Bulgarian question to address a communication on his own initiative to the interested Courts to the effect that they should acquiesce in the Russian plans respecting Bulgaria. I should prefer to see this overture made first by England only to the Powers interested in the East *primo loco* owing to their geographical position, i.e. Russia, the Porte, Austria and Italy, so that we and France remain for the time being *ex nexu*. France could then not complain of her isolation, whilst we should be in a position to step in to help at the birth of the scheme. Our co-operation for strengthening European peace by this means would, however, be equally assured, if Lord Salisbury preferred to address his overtures to all the Powers, including Germany and France. Whatever form the action took, France's isolation would still remain a fact, as soon as the agreement between England and Russia formed the basis of operations. I believe that such an initiative by Lord Salisbury would not only make for peace and pacify France, but would also restore to the British nation the feeling that it was exercising its proper influence on European politics. A Conference in London for the avowed purpose of assuring peace would, if successful, do more good to the Government in British public opinion than this or the other theory on the Irish Question.

Referring to the text of your despatch of August 3rd, I observe that I also believe that Russia intends to postpone action until war breaks out between France and Germany. But perhaps Russia is not the only Power awaiting this event before taking up a position, and even reasonable Frenchmen are looking forward to a Russo-German war in order to attack Germany.

There is to-day no more prospect or occasion for a Russo-



German war than there has been for a century past. I consider peace with Russia assured, and the Emperor Alexander displays no leaning towards war with Austria at present.

The Emperor is peaceable by nature, and no Russian Emperor, not driven to it under stress of Revolution or fear, would let loose a war with Germany, for even victory would hold out no prize to Russia, whereas ill-success would endanger the dynasty. Germany will certainly not attack Russia any more than she will France, and if France attacks us,—we should be entirely forsaken by God, if we were unable to cope with her.

I certainly do not believe that, if France took the offensive, she would receive Russia's support. If war broke out between France and Germany, and if we were victorious, I am convinced that Russia would demand assurances from us as to the nature of our peace terms; but I am equally convinced that, if we gave such assurances, a French aggression would stand no chance whatever of Russian support. But even in the contrary case, with a million good troops, well led on either of our frontiers, we should, quite apart from the help of Austria, still be in no desperate situation. . . .

Under these circumstances, the combination outlined to you by Lord Salisbury in connection with the Bulgarian situation, holds no further interest for us beyond our desire for the peace and welfare of Europe, and not only for us, but for the Powers who are our friends. I suggest confidentially that Lord Salisbury should earn the merit, before England as well as before Europe, of having initiated the understanding between these Powers. . . .

#### IV. 342

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*August 10th, 1887*

In addition to my secret report of August 3rd.

I had a confidential conversation with Lord Salisbury to-day and have sent off a report in cipher of its general import. The Minister, who still hesitates, was visibly anxious lest the change of policy envisaged here (BISMARCK: '*We have no call to press into it; but if Salisbury gravitates towards it the matter must be arranged so as to include Austria and Italy*') might drive Italy for her part into an understanding with France, which might be dangerous for England. (BISMARCK: '*Scarcely, if the matter is skilfully managed.*') My impression was that this anxiety, which is increased by his personal distrust of Crispi's political past (Italian Premier and Foreign Minister since August 8th), might eventually convince Lord Salisbury of the necessity of upholding the present understanding with Austria and Italy regarding the East. (BISMARCK: '*It must be upheld even whilst approaching Russia! We*

*desire primo loco the maintenance of the English-Austrian-Italian understanding. Lord Salisbury introduced the question of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. If we had discouraged it, the idea would become a means to bring pressure on us ; to avoid this we must betray no anxiety at the move. But if it is seriously intended, it must be done, so that Austria and Italy do not turn against England.'*)

## IV. 343

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, .  
August 12th, 1887

Lord Salisbury thanks Your Highness heartily for your kind and detailed reply to his question and promises strict discretion. He will give mature consideration to the proposal and considers it necessary to report on the situation at once to Her Majesty the Queen. He thinks that an immediate decision is not required, seeing that Your Highness considers the danger of war between France and the Central Powers is unlikely at present. As he indicated to-day, this possibility had caused him special anxiety since England might find herself called upon to maintain the integrity of Turkey alone.

Lord Salisbury repeated to me to-day that he holds the risk of driving Italy into the arms of France through the change in question to be a very serious one. (BISMARCK: '*We do not insist on the attempt, but do not oppose it. Our main point is to maintain the friendship between England, Austria and Italy. I am only considering England's rapprochement to Russia because Lord Salisbury suggested it, and I say that we should not hinder it or even watch it with suspicion.*') He does not know what arrangement with Italy will prevent it, for the Italians will scarcely see sufficient compensation in a free hand in the hard nut of Abyssinia. The handing over, perhaps, of Tripoli or a part of Albania would, however, be equivalent to opening the whole Eastern question. (BISMARCK: '*This does not necessarily follow. But it is probable from other causes, (cf. the last despatch from London, now in His Majesty's hands) and its unwished for appearance would be the day when the promises to Italy become due.*')

The Minister expressly intends, after consultation with Her Majesty whom he is going to visit at Osborne next week, to discuss the question with me again.

## IV. 344

COUNT BERCHEM, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO COUNT  
HATZFELDT, August 14th, 1887

*Secret.*

Your telegram of August 12th informs the Chancellor that

Lord Salisbury is again in doubt as to his decision on a rapprochement with Russia, on account of its effect on Italy.

He remarked on this that we did not insist on the experiment suggested by Salisbury (not by us), but also did not discourage it. Our chief desire is to uphold the friendship between England, Austria and Italy.

The Chancellor, as you know, only favoured the idea of a rapprochement at the wish and suggestion of Lord Salisbury, when His Highness desired you to say that we should not hinder such a rapprochement or even view it with mistrust.

There is no reason to expect, as Lord Salisbury suggests, that the necessity of offering the Italians compensation in Tripoli or Albania will certainly result in the 'opening of the whole Eastern question.' This is not a necessary consequence. But it is more likely that the Eastern question may be opened by other means,—e.g. that of Central Asia,—the possibility mentioned in your despatch of August 10th, for instance. The undesired cropping up of the Eastern crisis, from whichever side the blow falls, would be the day on which the promises to Italy become due.

#### IV. 344-5

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*August 18th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury made his report to Her Majesty the Queen yesterday and is determined, as he said to me in strict confidence, to adhere to his present policy in the East, but without hostility towards Russia.

To-day's conversation has convinced me that Lord Salisbury quite correctly understands our position regarding the question raised by him, as described in your despatch of August 14th.

#### IV. 345

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, LONDON,  
*August 24th, 1887*

I now discussed with Lord Salisbury the confidential exchange of ideas, that he had lately held with Count Hatzfeldt on Eastern affairs. He said that he had been considerably reassured by the communications made to him by order of the Chancellor. He had feared that a Russo-French war against ourselves and Austria was immediately imminent, in which case the best of our strength would be absorbed in the conflict with France, and that Russia's game with Austria would be an easy one. (BISMARCK: '?') In such a conflagration all the small Balkan States would doubtless be not only encouraged by Russia, but actually be supported

by her spare troops, (BISMARCK : ' ? ') and would then fall upon the Sultan. (BISMARCK : ' ? ') England in isolation (BISMARCK : ' *If she won't help Austria !* ') would be faced with the thankless task of protecting the Sultan. She would hardly be equal to this task, if she could receive no support from Austria or ourselves, completely engaged elsewhere. (BISMARCK : ' ? ') This anxiety had suggested to him the idea whether a change of policy in the direction of Russia would not be called for. But seeing that the matter in our opinion was not so threatening, his suggestion might well be laid aside for the present ; ' it may remain in abeyance '. (BISMARCK : ' *Good.*')

I tried to point out to Lord Salisbury in a friendly way the obscurity, not to say logical confusion, of his point of view. I began by saying he was wrongly informed on the comparative power of the States ;—if Russia and France attacked us together, we should deal with the latter on the defensive between the fortresses of the Rhineland and the Reichsland, and should need scarcely half of our conscripted forces for the purpose. The rest of our army, together with the unjustly underrated Austrian army, would thoroughly suffice, not only to keep Russia in check but to defeat her. We should have the right to use every means, —*ce sera une guerre à coups de révolutions*—to begin by driving the Polish thorn into the flank of Russia. With her slow mobilisation and dishonest administration, Russia would need 4-6 weeks to concentrate an army of 250,000 men, even then only fit for manœuvres, and we should force on an early peace, (BISMARCK : ' ? ') if the Tsar could hold his place even for so long. But if the defeat caused his disappearance, Russia would be all the weaker,—' that whole mountain of mud would then collapse.' <sup>1</sup> It was thus a chimera to imagine that the Russians would have any troops left over for the Balkans. Moreover, I doubted whether *rebus sic stantibus* all the Balkan States would attack the Sultan. The Greeks probably would, but their enmity with the Bulgarians might be used by skilful diplomacy without much difficulty to make Bulgaria join with the Sultan, and I could hardly imagine that Lord Salisbury thought England too weak to protect the Sultan, who possessed good troops, against Greece and Montenegro. Also he completely forgot Italy in his combination, the most enterprising element in the group of three Mediterranean States friendly to us.

She would be induced to make the greatest efforts by promises of territorial expansion. Lord Salisbury here said : ' I suppose Tripoli would be the thing.' I pointed out that this would be too small an offer, and he said : ' If part of Albania is given to Italy, we must promise Salonika to Austria, for she cannot allow herself

<sup>1</sup> English in the text.

to be pushed out of the Ægean Sea.' I replied that things had not yet reached the stage of dividing the bear's skin, and that it was always awkward, though I would not always deny the correctness of Lord Salisbury's saying—'in the end the Turk always has to pay for everything',—as it was founded on experience.

Meanwhile, it was not a question of dividing up the Sultan, but of maintaining him intact and of adding him to the group of Three. Baron Blanc (Italian Ambassador in Constantinople from April, 1887) had spoken very sensibly to our Chargé d'Affaires in Constantinople, and since England's cleverest Ambassador, as Salisbury called him, was there also, White and Blanc could be brought together (*abouchieren*) and commissioned to 'devise a plan in which way one might give more backbone to the Sultan.'<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury seemed to like this idea and was for writing to Sir W. White, only lamenting that it was impossible to include the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople, as he was so insignificant. Lord Salisbury cried despairingly: 'I cannot make Austria out; I never know what she wants and am more out of touch with her than ever. The chief reason is the two-sided representation. Our Paget in Vienna is no eagle and lazy as well, and Karolyi is quite weak in the head and also is always on leave.'

I asked Lord Salisbury if he wished any confidential news of this calamity to reach Count Kalnoky. He replied: 'I might perhaps, but if I suggest at all the removal of an Austrian Representative, I should try first for that of Calice. The Austrians require their very best man at Constantinople, and Calice is a downright nonentity!' To this I said that Salisbury could communicate direct to Kalnoky the results of the future deliberations of White and Blanc, but that it occurred to me that there might be concluded between the three Powers and the Sultan an agreement involving little in the way of obligations, similar to that between Spain and Italy, with ourselves and Austria in the background,—a *pactum de contrahendo*. Italy might be given a prominent position in it; her vanity would be flattered at this visible recognition of her consequence. The Sultan, no doubt, attached great importance to securing some kind of written agreement, however non-committal. If it could be arranged, it would have to be completed by one of the three Ambassadors, say Baron Blanc, with the Sultan direct, without consulting any Turkish Minister. Lord Salisbury nodded in agreement and said it could be done without using a dragoman, as they had an absolutely safe man in Munir Pacha.

I continued: 'Russian policy consists, as you know, in con-

<sup>1</sup> English in the text. Cf. Ch. XXIII.

vincing the Sultan that no Power will support him against Russia, and that his best course is to attach himself as closely as possible to Russia on conditions to be fixed by her ; in a word, to become a kind of Russian vassal, and if possible a vassal protected by Russian troops on the Bosphorus against revolts and palace revolutions. If the Sultan refused now to listen to Russia's admonitions, he would each time be driven against the hard wall. The first effort of the Three-Power-Group as it becomes ever more firmly welded together, should be to upholster this wall into appearing less hard, and finally to cut a little door through it for the Sultan to slip through to the other Powers, in case of need.'

To these last sentences I added : ' Even if you wish to return to your idea of a change of policy in the direction of Russia, it will be all to the good to be allied to Italy and Austria as closely as possible, and in any case more firmly than now. If you make Russia an offer in your own name alone, there is the danger that Russia, without availing herself of it, may mention it in Rome and Vienna with the intention of exciting the two Cabinets against you. This would be avoided, and your offer would carry quite a different weight, if you make it in the names of the other two as well, or if Russia finds, on feelers being made from the side of Austria and Italy, that you are already in touch with them. You would probably be able to arrange it most quickly with Italy. The only enemy she has to fear in Europe is France, and if it is proved to her that, once Russia is conciliated, the result will be France's absolute isolation and powerlessness, she will probably be delighted to help in what I should like to call "squaring Russia". The Chancellor has commissioned me to speak to you in this sense, but at the same time remarked in our conversation that of course he could give no guarantee that Russia would carry out honestly any arrangements made with England.'

Lord Salisbury received this remark with a loud and bitter laugh and declared he had more suspicions of Russia's honesty than perhaps any other man ; but he did not wish to test it now as, since Count Hatzfeldt's latest explanations and mine to-day, he saw no further immediate necessity for it. I replied that we were watching with sympathy and anxiety the internal difficulties with which Lord Salisbury had to contend, and which he had to bear almost entirely on his own shoulders in the present ministerial and parliamentary situation. It had occurred to the Chancellor that some sort of diplomatic action abroad might possibly stem the process of disintegration, which was becoming evident in the British Empire, and the lack of cohesion in the political parties. If Lord Salisbury shared this view, the attention of the British public might be distracted from conditions at home by the

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summoning of a Conference by Lord Salisbury in London to settle the Bulgarian question, after he should have agreed beforehand confidentially with Russia regarding its conclusions, under our auspices.

Lord Salisbury shook his head sorrowfully and said with a deep sigh: 'I am honestly grateful to Prince Bismarck for his sympathetic offer, but I am afraid that he is not aware of what our insular democracy really is. The exercise of England's sovereignty is now in the hands of the uneducated masses, which neither care for nor understand foreign politics. Our electors' chief interest is the satisfaction of every kind of unreasonable desire at home, and most of the Party leaders have just one selfish aim, which is to get into the Government as quickly and to stay there as long as possible. Lack of conviction and selfish opportunism have reached terrible proportions in our Parliament. This is why the British Empire is, to my deep regret, not able<sup>a</sup> to make its voice heard in the Concert of Europe as strongly (BISMARCK: 'Correct.') as her position as a Great Power ought to make possible. I can do nothing at present to alter it.' (BISMARCK: '?')

#### IV. 349

DERENTHALL, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO  
PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, in VIENNA, *September 4th, 1887*

Count Kalnoky's contention that the Sultan will not understand how our advice to him to join with the Austria-England-Italy group can be brought into line with our recommendation of the Russian proposals regarding Bulgaria, may be answered as follows: <sup>1</sup> It cannot be admitted that the Sultan, considers our general advice to co-operate actively with the Three-Power group as incompatible with our recommendation of the Russian proposals in a particular case like the Bulgarian affair. In each case our attitude is governed by our desire to uphold peace. Our wishes and efforts are directed against the disturbance of peace by the action of the Coburg Prince; eventually, however,—if the peace is after all disturbed—towards securing that as many Powers as possible are on the side of Austria. The Imperial Chancellor considers that the Three-Power group forms a reserve in case it actually came to blows. But the first aim of our policy is to prevent this.

#### IV. 350

PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*September 13th, 1887*

The Italian Ambassador (Count Nigra) has communicated to Count Kalnoky a despatch of Signor Crispi's, in which he records

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 311.

his great satisfaction at learning from the assurances of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that an attempt to separate Austria-Hungary from Italy and England would not succeed.

The Italian Premier adds the suggestion that it might be useful and indeed practical, considering the unanimity of the three Cabinets, to extend the agreement to cover the affairs of Bulgaria.

*German Note.*

According to the *Memoirs of Francesco Crispi* (English Translation), Vol. II, pp. 188-9, the Italian Premier desired to conclude a military Convention between the Mediterranean States; but Lord Salisbury negated this.

Count Kalnoky was rather alarmed at this forward movement and requested Count Nigra to warn Signor Crispi to be careful. Count Nigra was fully in agreement with this.

The Minister indicated that he was always ready to discuss the practical side of the question with the Italian Cabinet, but that without England's participation no active policy by the three Powers was possible. It would be best first to consult the British Cabinet.

Count Kalnoky feels it his duty to combat the illusion that energetic action on the part of the three Powers would induce the Porte to associate itself with it.

Certain confidential utterances by the British Ambassador here cause Count Kalnoky to infer that Lord Salisbury regards with anxiety the active course that the Italian Premier would like to follow, and that he has already warned him to be careful.

Count Kalnoky thinks that it will be no light task to keep the still somewhat inexperienced Italian director of Foreign Affairs in a good humour and to restrain him from ill-considered action.

IV. 351

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS,  
*September 24th, 1887*

*Secret.*

The recent rapprochement between Italy and Austria on the subject of their mutual policy in the Balkans is very gratifying to us. Since we ourselves are not vitally concerned in the outcome of the Balkan question, it is the business of our Allies to agree upon a common attitude in the event of a crisis arising. It would doubtless be to England's interest to draw even closer in her relations with Austria and Italy and to meet Signor Crispi's suggestion with good will. Moreover, the Italian Cabinet will now be in a position to realise that, if Italy is ever attacked by France, she will find Germany on her side.

I beg you to make use of the above in strict confidence at a suitable opportunity.

*German Note.*

On October 1st, 1887, Crispi paid a visit of several days to Prince Bismarck at Friedrichsruh. A report on the spot by Count Herbert Bismarck, who was present at the conversations from October 3rd onwards, and a despatch addressed to Prince Henry VII of Reuss on the same day, give further details of the conversations between the two statesmen. Both documents are corroborated by Crispi's full account of his interviews with Prince Bismarck in his *Memoirs* (Vol. II, pp. 211 seq.) and by his utterances to Baron Bruck.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck, above all, attempted to strengthen Crispi in the friendly attitude towards Austria which he displayed, and in his determination to work together with Austria in the Eastern question.

IV. 351-2

COUNT ZU SOLMS-SONNENWALDE, AMBASSADOR IN ROME,  
TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 12th, 1887*

Baron Bruck, the Austrian Ambassador, returned from an extended leave the day before yesterday and visited Signor Crispi yesterday. He congratulated him on his happy thought of visiting Friedrichsruh and said that he was sure that his conversations with Your Highness must have convinced him how closely Germany and Austria were bound together. This showed to what degree the most complete co-operation between two Great Powers was possible, and there was rejoicing in Austria at Italy's willingness to attach herself closely to the Alliance.

Signor Crispi replied that he had been a Republican, but had recognised that the only form of government possible for Italy was a monarchy. He had also made up his mind that the one correct policy for Italy was a close connexion with Austria and Germany. Italy needed peace, and this was the only means of securing it. As regarded Eastern affairs, the right policy to follow was to inspire the Sultan with special confidence in Austria, England and Italy, as against Russia. Hence it was necessary to work for more active co-operation on England's part. Every means must be sought to maintain peace. But if Russia resorted to arms against Turkey or advanced into Bulgaria, Austria could not, no more than could Italy, stand quite aside, and in that case Italy would be ready to place from 100,000 to 200,000 men at Austria's disposal.

Baron Bruck's comment was that this was no spirited phrase thrown out in excited conversation, but a fully considered declaration in a serious diplomatic interview. The impression he received so surprised and delighted him that he telegraphed at once to Vienna. Baron Bruck added that Signor Crispi's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also the despatch of November 4th, 1887, and enclosures.

policy was peaceful throughout and aimed at seeking every means for maintaining peace. Only if it proved impossible, did he advocate energetic action.

I think I ought to mention that Baron Bruck's telegram to Vienna, the contents of which he has communicated to me, does not speak of a Russian advance into Bulgaria, but only of a Russian attack on Turkey or Austria, in which case Signor Crispi would place 100,000 to 200,000 men at Austria's disposal. The Ambassador answered my remark on this point by saying that Signor Crispi's motive in deciding to resist Russian action was not friendship for Austria and Turkey, but consideration for Italian interests, which in his opinion were threatened by Russia, since Italy could under no circumstances allow Russia to set foot upon the shores of the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER XXIII

# THE ENTENTE BETWEEN ENGLAND, ITALY AND AUSTRIA (2)

### THE EIGHT POINTS

#### IV. 353

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, *October 20th, 1887*

The Austrian Chargé d'Affaires (Ritter von Eissenstein) handed to me to-day confidentially the accompanying documents.

Enclosure I is the draft submitted by the Representatives of England, Austria and Italy in Constantinople (White, Calice and Blanc) for an Agreement between the three Powers.

This Draft, to which Count Kalnoky has added his remarks tabulated in Enclosure II, has already been communicated in Rome and approved by Signor Crispi.

Count Kalnoky desires to learn the Chancellor's views on the Draft,—which has apparently been drawn up under the aegis of Calice—before communicating it in London; he hopes for our approval of it, since the agreement intended here—to bind the three powers together according to our recommendation—would be all the more firmly established.

I may assume that Sir W. White has already informed Lord Salisbury of the proposal, but Count Kalnoky appeared to attach much importance to his suggestion of 'that he should not go to Lord Salisbury until the Chancellor's views were known to him'. The Austrian statesman also begs us, assuming that the Draft does not come under our criticism, to use our whole influence with Lord Salisbury, to induce him to join with Austria and Italy. Nothing but strong pressure from us would bring Salisbury to a decision, owing to his tendency to procrastinate. (BISMARCK: '*Not even from us, but it must be tried.*')

If I am empowered to speak in favour of this request, I will get into communication with Malet. (BISMARCK: '*Yes.*') Hatzfeldt has been on leave for two months since September 15th, and Plessen has not the necessary weight, as Chargé d'Affaires,

to bring successful pressure on Salisbury. Or shall Hatzfeldt's leave be interrupted? (BISMARCK: '*Not yet; only if the sounding by Malet gives hopes of success—or if it does not cut off hope altogether.*') )

## IV. 354

*Enclosure I.*

## BASES D'UN ACCORD À TROIS

*Secret.*

1. Maintien de la paix à l'exclusion de toute politique d'aggression.

2. Maintien du statu quo (BISMARCK: '*Bulgaria?*') en Orient fondé sur les traités, à l'exclusion de toute politique de compensations.

3. Maintien des autonomies locales établies par ces mêmes traités.

4. Indépendance de la Turquie, gardienne d'intérêts Européens importants (indépendance du Chalifat, liberté des détroits, etc.) de toute influence étrangère prépondérante.

5. Par conséquent la Porte ne peut ni céder ni déléguer ses droits suzerains sur la Bulgarie à une autre puissance, ni intervenir pour y établir une administration étrangère, ni tolérer des actes de coercition, entrepris dans ce dernier but, sous forme soit d'occupation militaire, soit d'envoi de volontaires, ce qui constituerait, non seulement une infraction au statu quo légal, mais serait attentatoire aux intérêts des trois Puissances.

6. Désir de ces dernières de s'associer la Turquie pour la défense commune de ces principes. (BISMARCK: '*This he dares not in spite of 7.*') )

7. Dans les cas de résistance de la Porte aux entreprises illégales susindiquées les trois Puissances se concerteront aussitôt sur l'appui à lui donner.

8. Dans le cas, cependant, où la Porte serait en connivence avec une entreprise illégale du genre indiqué ou bien, dans le cas où elle n'y opposerait pas une résistance sérieuse, les trois Puissances se concerteront dans le but d'occuper provisoirement par leurs forces de terre ou de mer, certains points du territoire ottoman, afin de rétablir l'équilibre politique et militaire nécessaire pour la sauvegarde des principes et des intérêts susmentionnés.

(BISMARCK: '*It is not in our interest to fight for the programme, and equally not so to oppose it. We can only fight for Germany's interests, and they are not present here.*') )

## IV. 355

*Enclosure II*

## REMARKS ON THE 'BASIS D'UN ACCORD À TROIS'

*German Note.*

The despatch shows that they are founded on Count Kalnoky's observations.

On Clause 2. The words 'à l'exclusion de toute politique de compensations' are really only an obvious explanation of the main principle. They are, however, not superfluous, for Italy would regard the removal of the danger of a 'politique de compensations' as applied to the intentions of Russia and Germany (BISMARCK: 'P') in the light of a chief reason for entering the intended Entente.

Clause 3. Corresponds, as do the preceding two clauses, with the common programme of the three Governments.

Clause 4. A main principle in the spirit of the Treaties, in which all Europe and especially England are interested. Official opinion in England to-day will certainly not be excited in the cause of the integrity of the Turkish Empire. A possible Russo-Turkish Alliance, the subjection of the Caliphate, or the surrender of the Straits, are the only dangers with which she cannot associate herself, and which the Salisbury Cabinet at any rate appreciates better than the one which preceded it.

Clause 5. Apart from the risk that the recent establishment of the Russians in Bulgaria<sup>1</sup> may involve in the near future the fall of Constantinople, amongst other evil results, (BISMARCK: 'It will be well to suggest to Salisbury that this would be an injury to Austria. It should be explained to him that Russia, once in possession of Constantinople, would need Austria's friendship more than before') there is no proof needed—and the British Ambassador lays special stress on this idea—that the establishment of Russia in the Principalities would immensely increase the pressure which Russia can even now exercise on the Sultan's decisions, and also make Russia's influence in Constantinople absolute.

Clauses 6 and 7. In the present state of affairs it cannot be expected that the Porte will oppose with energy any forcible aggression by Russia. (BISMARCK: 'No.') If it fails to do so, it will be right and in the common interests of the three Powers to come to its assistance.

It is therefore much more likely that Turkey will accept passively or even connive at a Russian act of aggression, and moreover it would be difficult to move England to direct counter-action, if Turkey does nothing. As, therefore, it is to the interest

<sup>1</sup> *German Note.*

The Russian plan for sending General Ernroth to Sofia, which was regarded as the forerunner of a Russian military occupation.

of all to avoid war as long as possible, an expedient will have to be found for securing the aims of the three Powers without involving direct conflict with Russia.

The three Representatives considered that an agreement on the lines contemplated here, the practical justification of which can indeed not be questioned, would suffice to give Turkey—morally at least—some resisting power, in which she now seems utterly wanting, and to make Russia more cautious and less ready to enter into illegal plans for future enterprises. If this is not the case, it is thought here that the occupation of suitable parts of the Balkan Peninsula by the three Powers, combined with the appearance of a fleet before the Dardanelles, with no intention of attacking the Russian troops, but only of restoring for a time the political and military equilibrium, if actually disturbed, will succeed in restricting and cutting short Russia's activity, rousing Turkey from her lethargy and moving her to active resistance to the Russian occupation; and finally, if the necessity arises, in preparing for genuine co-operation between the four Powers in any conflict with Russia.

#### IV. 356

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT ZU RANTZAU, AT FRIEDRICHSMUNDE,  
*October 21st, 1887*

The Chancellor desires an answer to be returned to the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires to the effect that His Highness has no objection to raise against the 8 Points. He considers the adhesion of Turkey the most important, and at the same time the most difficult to obtain. The Sultan will find it hard to swallow the 'ni tolérer des actes de coercition' in No. 5, and will in any case do so only if England's co-operation has been obtained beforehand. Turkey's passive resistance against Russian suggestions will be successfully aroused all the sooner, if the *appui* of the British fleet, as mentioned in No. 7, has been assured.

We should make enquiries provisionally in London through Sir Edward Malet, and if there is any prospect of success, we should recall Count Hatzfeldt from leave in order to push the matter in London.

We should never undertake war with Russia for the sake of Eastern affairs, but should only hold France in check.

From the technical point of view His Highness has nothing to say against the 8 Points, all the less because any criticism of the form might weaken the relations towards Signor Crispi. It would in the meantime be a great advantage to cultivate these relations and to make the Italian Statesman enthusiastic for the present policy. The unanimity of the three Ambassadors at Constantinople was in itself a step which must not be



prejudiced, and His Highness does not consider any technical criticism he might have to be important enough to endanger the budding understanding existing so far between the Courts of Rome and Vienna and between the Ambassadors of all three Powers.

Count Kalnoky's remarks on Clause 5 suggest to His Highness the thought expressed in his marginal note, namely that he does not consider it advantageous for Austria, in dealing with England, to display too great an interest in Constantinople as an argument against a Russian occupation of Bulgaria. It would have more effect, if Vienna (and not we, who have done it quite often enough) suggest to the English the possibility that, once Russia is in possession of Constantinople, the Russian need of Austria's friendship might bring about an understanding between the two Imperial Powers.

His Highness begs you to reply to the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires in the above sense, when he opens the matter, and to declare that, in His Highness's opinion, Signor Crispi's enthusiasm should not be allowed to cool.

#### IV. 357-8

COUNT ZU SOLMS-SONNENWALDE, AMBASSADOR IN ROME,  
TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *October 24th, 1887*

*Secret.*

As regards the eighth Point, Count Kalnoky is not in agreement with a special Entente à deux (Italy and Austria) inside an Entente à trois (including England).<sup>1</sup> He wishes Lord Salisbury to decide first of all whether he accepts the eight Points. Action by Austria and Italy without England is an impossibility. All other combinations entail the risk of reckoning with wrong data. The break-up of Turkey is still too far off for any treaty to be based on it now.

BISMARCK: '*Our best course is to leave the two Powers concerned to agree together about an Entente à deux, whether or no, without interference by us. We continue to recommend the Entente à trois in England, indicating that it will be needed, if the Entente à deux is to be effective and durable. We are able to forge a lasting alliance with Italy without England; but Austria and Italy need the British cement.*'

#### VI. 358

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO COUNT MONTS, CHARGÉ  
D'AFFAIRES IN VIENNA, *November 4th, 1887*

*Very secret.*

The Austrian Chargé d'Affaires communicated to me in strict confidence the enclosed copy of a report by the Austrian

<sup>1</sup> See p. 325.

Ambassador in Rome (October 15th); also Count Kalnoky's secret despatch of October 20th, dealing with it. At the same time Herr von Eissenstein read me a further secret despatch from the Austrian Minister, declaring the agreements suggested by Italy, in anticipation of the break-up of Turkey, to be ill-timed. I cannot say that Count Kalnoky is unjustified in this, for there can be no guarantee of the absolute secrecy of such agreements, of which a certain number of officials of the contracting Powers must necessarily be aware. The mere knowledge that they exist would engender invincible suspicion in the Sultan. Therefore it would be preferable for the present to be content with verbal discussions on these delicate questions between the leading statesmen.

According to Count Kalnoky's communications, Lord Salisbury<sup>1</sup> has received the 8 Points, secretly drawn up by the Ambassadors in Constantinople, favourably and says that he thinks himself personally able to guarantee England's acceptance of them. He must, however, first disclose the matter to the Cabinet, which will make its decision without delay.<sup>1</sup>

I informed Herr von Eissenstein that I would suggest that Vienna should request Lord Salisbury not to mention this secret matter to the Cabinet, which consists of 16 members. Lord Salisbury combined the offices of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and so did not require the opinions of the uninfluential portion of his colleagues in the Ministry. At most the agreement of Goschen was necessary, for he represented in the Cabinet the Unionists, who were indispensable for a Majority.

The Chancellor, to whom I showed the enclosed papers, approves my remarks and requests you to thank Count Kalnoky for his communication.

I spoke in this sense to Sir Edward Malet and shall request Count Hatzfeldt, who arrives here to-day on his return journey to London, to join in urging upon Lord Salisbury the necessity of complete secrecy in dealing with this matter and to use his influence, so that England will join the *accord à trois* according to the 8 Points.

In order to obtain this, care must be taken not to demand too much from England. Lord Salisbury has, so far as he himself is concerned, held out prospects of England's accession. But he is weak personally and has not, like Crispi, a large and assured majority behind him. His position is therefore a difficult one with regard to extensive promises and we must avoid demanding more of him than in his situation he can grant. It would merely lead to a *non possumus* on his part. The aim of the States interested in keeping the Salisbury Cabinet in power must be carefully and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Francesco Crispi's 'Memoirs,' English translation, p. 256 seq.

gradually to strengthen it and by diplomatic persuasion to induce its Chief to stand more firmly on his own feet.

Baron Bruck's reports, which I enclose, of the Chancellor's utterances in his conversations with Signor Crispi are on the whole correct, although in part, perhaps, reproduced in too strong colours. It is true that Prince Bismarck advised the Italian Premier 'de s'arranger directement avec l'Autriche dans la question d'Orient', and that he indicated his probable agreement with any arrangement between the two Powers, which came within the scope of what had been agreed to by us. Still, His Highness neither considers the financial collapse of Turkey to be immediately imminent, nor does he believe in a Russo-Turkish war in the near future. Both events are possible, but they will be delayed for a long time yet. In particular, a Russian attack on Turkey does not lie within the range of probability. Russian policy is rather directed at avoiding war with Turkey and at reaching a settlement with the Sultan à l'amiable. What Russia desires is the control of the Straits. She can obtain this cheaper and more conveniently by a protective treaty with the Sultan than by war. If in return for a promise of protection against domestic and foreign enemies the much-worried Sultan grants to Russia by treaty the authority to occupy and fortify the Straits, Russia will have achieved her desires without a war, and that in the most disadvantageous way for England. If the Sultan heard of agreements inside the *Entente à trois*, chiefly aimed at the regulation of his property, he would all the more easily sell himself to Russia, and Russia would always be strong enough to receive him with open arms and 'protect' him, directly he sought refuge with her against the partition schemes of other powers. The Sultan will reflect that he will certainly fare better by giving the Straits up to the Russians and accepting a guarantee for his sovereignty over the remainder, than by letting his Empire be partitioned by others. Therefore the Chancellor agrees with Count Kalnoky in thinking any agreement between Italy and Austria, going beyond the eighth Point and contemplating the collapse of Turkey, premature and—on account of the possibility of its becoming known—dangerous. For it is of greater import to the conservative Mediterranean Powers to maintain and fortify the Sultan in an anti-Russian course than to cling to the ties imposed by British support. From a military standpoint, Turkey's attitude, either for or against Russia, is of far greater value for the Austro-Italian Alliance than the attitude of England. The strategic advantages of co-operation with Turkey against Russia arise out of Turkey's geographical position, and the partial mobilisation of 1885 showed that Turkey is capable of calling up her splendid man-power much quicker than was formerly

imagined. If Austria and Italy secure for themselves the Sultan's adhesion, they not only have at their disposal an extra 100,000 good troops, but they also from henceforth make any Russian military success in the Balkan Peninsula problematical. If matters take the opposite course, the two former Powers will lose the advantage of being able to act with energy against Russia. In this respect the Sultan holds the balance.

I respectfully beg you to speak in strict confidence to Count Kalnoky in the foregoing sense.

#### IV. 361

##### *Enclosure I*

BARON BRUCK, AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR IN ROME,  
TO COUNT KALNOKY, *October 15th, 1887*

I have communicated your draft of the 'Bases d'un accord à trois', enclosed in your despatch of October 10th, to Signor Crispi in strict secrecy. He at once assured me that he will treat this document, as well as all those relating to the subject, on a basis of secrecy. (BISMARCK: '*Really!*') Crispi agrees entirely with all 8 Points and merely remarked on No. 3 that it was very desirable to bear Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin in mind.

##### *German Note.*

This Article regulated the establishment of autonomous self-governing bodies in the Turkish provinces.

He declared himself ready to take steps in England at once, with the object of inducing Lord Salisbury to give his full agreement to the *accord à trois* as soon as might be. Count Corti (BISMARCK: '*!*') would be in London by to-morrow and would receive instructions to this effect. Signor Crispi could not say for certain whether Count Hatzfeldt really intended to approach Lord Salisbury for the same purpose, (BISMARCK: '*He certainly does!*') but he has received a despatch from Berlin, showing that this visit is probable.

Crispi thinks that, as soon as England has declared her consent to the principles of these 'Bases', it will not be so difficult to find a form by which England's accession may be made to appear binding. Crispi shares Your Excellency's conviction that Salisbury will try to avoid a formal secret Treaty, but he considers that an exchange of Notes will serve the same purpose and that it will merely be a question of finding a form to sound decisive and binding.

The Italian Premier then spoke in strict secrecy of his feelings about the necessity for a further extension of Point 8 in the *Bases à trois* mentioned above.

' Dans mon entretien avec le Prince de Bismarck nous avons envisagé la question d'Orient sous tous les différents points de vue (BISMARCK : ' ? ') et, tout en constatant que nous suivons tous une politique éminemment pacifique, nous n'avons pas pu faire à moins que de convenir que l'écroulement de l'Empire ottoman pourrait arriver, soit par suite de la position financière qui devient de plus en plus désastreuse, soit par suite d'une guerre avec la Russie. (BISMARCK : ' ? *Both these may be delayed a long time. Russia will only gain the Straits by treaty with the Sultan.*') Or, à mon point de vue il serait pratique de occuper aussi de cette éventualité, afin de ne pas être pris au dépourvu si une telle catastrophe venait à nous surprendre un beau matin. . . . Le Prince de Bismarck m'a répondu qu'il saisissait parfaitement bien ma pensée (BISMARCK : ' ? *Non mi ricordo!*') et qu'il me conseillait de m'arranger directement avec l'Autriche-Hongrie qui, dans la question d'Orient, avait les mêmes idées que le Gouvernement italien. (BISMARCK : ' ? *Perhaps.*') Quant à lui, il y donnait d'avance son assentiment. (BISMARCK : ' *To every arrangement between France and Austria.*') Je vous prie donc, mon cher Baron, d'écrire au Comte Kalnoky à cet égard et de lui demander s'il consentirait à conclure avec nous un arrangement des plus secrets, qui aurait pour but de donner une suite à l'Article 8 des Bases à trois et aurait le grand avantage de prévoir et régler d'avance une éventualité qui ne range certainement pas dans le domaine de l'impossible. (BISMARCK : ' *Premature and dangerous, if the Sultan hears of it.*') On sait à Vienne que je travaille au maintien de la paix et que je suis tout à fait décidé à maintenir l'intégrité de l'Empire ottoman, mais mieux vaut prévoir toutes les difficultés que de s'exposer à une surprise désagréable.

' Quant à l'Angleterre nous devons tâcher qu'elle signe d'abord les 8 paragraphes contenus dans les Bases à trois ; pour le reste, il serait encore inutile de l'initier à tous les détails, mais on peut être sur d'avance que, le cas échéant, elle se rangera tout à fait de notre côté et fera cause commune avec nous.'

I could only inform Signor Crispi that I should not fail to report to Your Highness at once, but that for the moment I could only speak in favour of the *Bases à trois* since it was of the utmost importance for Austro-Hungary as well as for Italy, in such a vital question, to obtain the binding adhesion of England. (BISMARCK : ' *And to keep the Sultan anti-Russian.*')'

Finally, I must add a request, which was put to me direct, that all negotiations and communications on this subject may be dealt with through me only, since the great importance of this affair demands the strictest secrecy (BISMARCK : ' *With 16 English Cabinet Ministers!*') and much depends on its being known of by very few.

## IV. 363

*Enclosure II*

COUNT KALNOKY TO BARON BRUCK, AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN  
AMBASSADOR IN ROME, *October 20th, 1887*

Your Excellency's mail of October 15th has duly come into my hands, and I have read with much interest the secret report of the same date and the private letter with its full description of your conversation with Signor Crispi on the Bases for a closer union *à trois* regarding the Eastern questions. On receipt of them, I made haste, once assured of Signor Crispi's agreement with the principles of the 8 Points, to make a similar communication to the German Cabinet, in order to make sure of Prince Bismarck's valuable support, before entering into negotiations with Lord Salisbury.

I shall not fail to inform you by telegraph, so that the opportunity may be offered to Signor Crispi to use his influence also with the British Cabinet.

As regards the further suggestion of the Italian Premier, who wishes to use the eighth Point of the 'Bases' for converting the by no means imminent question of the downfall of Turkey into the subject of a detailed agreement between us and Italy, I shall to-day merely request you to express to the Premier my grateful thanks for his frank overtures to you on this subject. But I think it of the greatest importance for the present to occupy ourselves exclusively with the intrinsically difficult arrangement of a nearer understanding with England, as outlined in the *Bases pour un accord à trois*. When we have succeeded in inducing England to give us some form of binding assurance on the grounds of the Bases proposed by us for certain definite eventualities in the East, then only will the logical moment have arrived for discussing, other than theoretically, the possibility of the collapse of the Turkish rule in Europe. Ever since the seventies I have been convinced more and more that the maintenance of the Turkish Empire is a primal necessity. In Greece and Bulgaria it is clearly felt that it will be long before they are strong enough to realise their claims on their several portions of the Turkish heritage,—and even in St. Petersburg they are alarmed at the prospect of this catastrophe, for there is no pretence that Russia, even by bringing to bear the whole strength of her Empire, could achieve a result corresponding with Russian aspirations. So I think that no risk lies behind these questions raised by Signor Crispi.

(BISMARCK: ' ? *Directly the Sultan feels himself threatened by the partition contemplated by Italy and the rest, he will throw himself into Russia's arms, and Russia is always strong enough to welcome this. The Russians only demand of the Sultan the right to fortify*

*and occupy the Straits. If he concedes that, they will guarantee the rest to him, and this will suit the Sultan far better than a break-up and a partition.'*)

Merely for your own personal guidance I may remark very confidentially that it would be an undoubted advantage to Italy, if we bind ourselves to her in all future questions concerning the East, but that there is no special inducement for us, nor is there any particular advantage to be gained for the Monarchy (BISMARCK: '?? *But there is always that of Italy remaining firm.*') by our entering alone with Italy into such agreements on events which may happen in a distant future.

I can only repeat that for serious action against Russian aggression the Italian Alliance will only have any great (BISMARCK: '*Right.*') practical value to Austria-Hungary, if England acts with us and Italy along similar lines and to an equal extent, and that I do not doubt Signor Crispi's good intentions in these fine phrases of his: that wherever we send Austrian troops, '*nous y trouverons cent ou deux cent mille Italiens qui leur donneront la main et qu'en suite nous batterons la Russie avec la Turquie s'il le faut.*' (BISMARCK: '*In a military sense Turkey's attitude for or against Russia makes a greater difference than England's.*') But I am obliged to accept these fine-spoken promises with caution, rendered necessary by the serious consequences that may arise in such matters through self-deception and errors of calculation. (BISMARCK: '*Right.*')

#### IV. 365

SIR EDWARD MALET, BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN, TO  
COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, *November 7th, 1887*

*Private.*

I have received a telegram from Lord Salisbury to-night saying that the Cabinet has postponed the consideration of the Austro-Italian proposals until Friday in consequence of the information that Count Hatzfeldt would come to London immediately after seeing the Chancellor.<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury adds that I am not to infer, from this delay, that the proposal has been unfavourably received.

#### IV. 365

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT,  
*November 8th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Whilst in Berlin you were informed verbally of the secret negotiations for an understanding between England, Austria

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 329.

and Italy on the basis of the maintenance of peace and of the status quo in the East, and also of our attitude regarding them. For your further personal information and with a recommendation to strict secrecy in dealing with it, I send you a copy of the '8 Points', embodying the result of the conversations between the Ambassadors in Constantinople,—also an extract from a secret despatch of November 4th addressed to the Imperial Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna together with enclosures.<sup>1</sup>

With reference to our oral discussion and to the instructions handed to you at Friedrichsruh, I repeat my request that you bring your influence to bear on Lord Salisbury to persuade him to conclude an agreement in some form with Austria and Italy on the present basis.

If, as you expected, you find that Lord Salisbury proposes certain alterations in the drafting, his Austrian and Italian colleagues will no doubt be ready to meet his wishes. The Constantinople Points were only described by the Ambassadors themselves as 'bases d'un accord', and were not drafted at all in the style of an Agreement. Thus they still naturally require final editing.

It is most important not only that there should be an Entente between Austria and Italy, but also that England should join it in some binding form. Only England's adhesion can make the Entente between the former two Powers effective and durable. We Germans could, even without England, form a lasting alliance with Italy, but for Austria and Italy to stick firmly together British cement is necessary.

Moreover, the Sultan will feel more confidence in the group of three than in a mere Entente between Italy and Austria, with England outside. British prestige and influence are greater in Turkey than those of the other Powers, and the Sultan pays more attention to the movements of the British fleet than to the numerical strength of the armies of the rest. . . .

#### IV. 366

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*November 10th, 1887*

*Secret.*

I learn from my to-day's very confidential conversation with Lord Salisbury that the majority of his colleagues, whom he has so far consulted, are on the whole favourably disposed towards an agreement on the basis of the 8 Points on the assumption that the wording will be re-drafted. As regards the substance of the 8 Points, the opinion of the Cabinet is that the protection to be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 328 et seq.



accorded to Turkey should not be confined to Bulgaria only and that, if Bulgaria is specially mentioned in this connexion, the same should be made to apply to Asia Minor also, which is no less threatened.

Lord Salisbury said to me in strict confidence that some of his colleagues were asking for further information as to our attitude towards the proposed Agreement, of which so far nothing is known here, except from a private letter from Sir Edward Malet. I advised him strongly to dissuade them from that.

Our conversation seems to show clearly that Lord Salisbury will use his influence in to-morrow's Council in favour of the proposals made here, as a basis for further negotiations.

To this end he intends to discuss confidentially with me the alterations in the draft, which appear necessary, and then to submit them to Your Highness. I am to meet Lord Salisbury to-morrow afternoon after the Cabinet meeting.

#### IV. 367

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
November 11th, 1887

*Secret.*

The text embodying the result of our to-day's conversation is as follows, and is passed by Salisbury as correct :

'Le Cabinet anglais s'est mis d'accord aujourd'hui pour accepter en principe, sauf rédaction et sauf la question de l'Asie Mineure mentionnées dans mon télégramme d'hier, les 8 Points qui lui sont proposés comme bases d'un arrangement secret.

'Le Cabinet anglais, fort impressionné par l'incertitude qui peut résulter pour l'avenir de l'Allemagne par suite de l'état malheureux si grave du Prince Impérial désirerait du reste, avant de prendre une résolution définitive, être assuré de l'approbation morale de l'Allemagne pour l'arrangement qui est proposé à l'Angleterre.

'Une pareille assurance, pour laquelle le secret le plus absolu serait garanti par Lord Salisbury, pourrait, si le Prince de Bismarck le préfère, se rattacher simplement aux engagements qui existent entre l'Empire et l'Autriche.' (BISMARCK : *'That would be all right, but it does not agree with the most recent arrangement.'*)

It is my impression, after combating with every possible argument the desire of Lord Salisbury's colleagues for an expression of Germany's moral approval, that a confidential communication of our agreement with Austria, at most offering England a sort of share in it, would allay every qualm here.

(BISMARCK : *'The communication may take place at once. England's participation would not be possible without an Act of Parliament, for the Salisbury Cabinet is not the same as "England".'*)

*Moreover, questions of existence, le cas échéant, are more compelling than treaties, and for the sake of our own existence we cannot do without either England or Austria, as effective Great Powers.—Russia's duplicity.'*)

I consider Lord Salisbury absolutely honest when he promises to hold the desired statement strictly secret, and he would take care that it does not fall into the hands of his successor in Office, if a change of Ministry takes place.

My report follows to-morrow.

#### IV. 368

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*November 12th, 1887*

*Secret.*

I am convinced, from my detailed and very confidential conversations with the Premier yesterday and the day before, that his personal sympathies favour the Austro-Italian proposals, but that he thinks his political position not strong enough to enter upon far-reaching decisions in foreign policy, without the expressed sanction of all his colleagues. This agreement seems to him all the more indispensable, since, as he gave me to understand in strict confidence, there are two currents of opinion in the Cabinet itself, one of which points to the danger from France threatening this country (BISMARCK: '*We are undertaking to keep France at peace or to keep her busy, if she attacks England*') if England concludes alliances which France might take as directed against herself. In this connexion Lord Salisbury indicated that in Paris they could not be aware of the negotiations now in progress between England and the other two Powers, but that they must have some vague idea that something unwelcome to France was going on. It was already being strongly hinted there that England might count in future on France's friendship, if she would renounce all projects directed against France. (BISMARCK: '!')

Lord Salisbury at once added that he personally had no belief in France's offer of friendship and did not know what advantage England would gain by it. His object was to explain to me the difficulties he has to contend with in this present question with a section of his colleagues, whose fixed desire is to avoid anything that may seriously annoy France.

Our detailed discussion of the '*Bases d'un accord à trois*' emanating from Constantinople, the faulty drafting of which Lord Salisbury indicated at once, as I expected, quickly showed that the Minister raises no objection to the ideas underlying the individual Points, if the form can be altered to come more into line with his Parliamentary necessities. The remark that I

reported, namely, that weight is laid here on a special reference to Asia Minor, if Bulgaria also is mentioned, will, so far as I can judge, not raise any serious difficulty. (BISMARCK: '*We may hope so.*') This wish of the British Government's is called forth by the form of Articles 5 and 7. The inference drawn is that only attacks on Bulgaria are to bring into being the intended understanding between the Powers. The ground for this notion is that Article 5 only obliges the Sultan to resist attacks on Bulgaria, and that Article 7 begins: '*dans le cas de résistance de la Porte aux entreprises illégales susmentionnées*'. According to this the Concert of the Powers only intervenes as a consequence of enterprises against Bulgaria.

If I am not mistaken, a different and more general form of words would overcome the scruples of the British Government on this point, supposing that the two other Powers object to including a special mention of Asia Minor.

The day before yesterday Lord Salisbury informed me, as I mentioned in my report, of the wish of part of the Cabinet for further information about our attitude regarding the understanding which we recommend. After the Cabinet meeting yesterday he referred again to this point, which, as Your Highness knows, I combated from the start. He said that his colleagues clung firmly to this desire for reasons which, unfortunate as they were, he was forced to touch upon and explain. The Cabinet was exercised at the deeply regrettable news of the Crown Prince's state of health and could not shut its eyes to the anxiety occasioned by this shattering intelligence, lest sooner or later, in consequence of it, our policy might take an anti-British turn. (BISMARCK: '*No.*') H.R.H. Prince William was a very young man, endowed with splendid talents, and his lively, Russian sympathies were no secret. (BISMARCK: '*?*') There was cause for fear, therefore, that in certain circumstances later on a new and closer understanding might come into being with Russia, and might result in that active (BISMARCK: '*Stupid!*') support of Russia in the East against the very Powers an understanding with whom we were now recommending.

(BISMARCK: '*Impossible. We could never follow a policy which would end in our isolation, the moment Russia chose. We cannot be left alone depending on Russia's friendship after all that has happened since '78, nor can we quarrel with Austria, England and Italy, with whom the German Alliance is popular. The idea of our working for an alliance with Russia and putting ourselves at the mercy of their humours in St. Petersburg!*')

The Minister added that his unwavering confidence in Your Highness was too well known to me for it to be necessary for him to declare his disbelief in the above-mentioned possibility, so long

as Your Highness controlled German policy. But the dangers of an uncertain future, so impossible to reckon on with any security (BISMARCK : '*It is possible.*'), were not excluded by it ; and so the desire of his colleagues to be reassured regarding the far future should not arouse annoyance in us. It was a question of an agreement involving England in wide responsibilities, and however strong the bond might seem between the three Powers, one which would perhaps expose her to serious complications, great sacrifices and risks in war.

Your Highness may be convinced that I repeatedly used every possible argument to combat this standpoint. I explained over and over again that Germany, in her particularly hazardous situation between Russia and France, and not possessing special interests in the East to justify active intervention, can only contemplate the maintenance of peace, and that, as it is, she is doing the greatest service to the three Powers, including England, of whose alliance it is now a question, which could be expected from us, preventing France from moving a single man without our permission. I explained that as Lord Salisbury knew, and as I have often declared in Your Highness's name, Germany had a real interest in maintaining Austria's position as a Great Power,—that same Austria, with whom England now desires to enter into a closer relationship, owing to the similarity of both their interests.

Lord Salisbury's colleagues would therefore be absolutely mistaking the situation, if they expect a change in German policy (BISMARCK substitutes '*consider possible*'), which is prompted by such serious interests. (BISMARCK substitutes '*compelling*'.) In my humble opinion they mistake their own interests no less, if they refuse to recognise that the offer of the two Powers is a stroke of luck for England, which a short while ago they could not have hoped for, and that the happy combination of circumstances which brought it about might never return, and England would be the loser, if the goodwill of the other Powers failed to find a welcome here now. (BISMARCK : '*It would tempt Austria to come to an understanding with Russia at any price.*')

Lord Salisbury recognised the validity of this and other arguments arising out of the situation. (I omit them to avoid making this report longer than it is.) At the same time he said that his colleagues did not all share this conviction, and, even if my arguments were correct, it did not necessarily follow that they would remain so, supposing that ill-luck would have it that the direction of affairs in Germany fell one day into hands inclined for a rapprochement with Russia. (BISMARCK : '*This last would be only possible, à trois, possibly with Austria. England's abstention would drive us to it in the end.*')

Now came the question—what kind of reassurance the British

Cabinet desired regarding our attitude to the affair. I declared at once that I thought it doubtful whether Your Highness, quite apart from the arguments I had already brought forward, could or would make any declaration in writing. Its possible misuse might bring us into conflict with Russia, which Your Highness must and would avoid both in the interests of European peace and of Germany. (BISMARCK: '*Correct.*')

It was not easy to discover from the Minister's rather vague and hesitating utterances what kind of reassurance is desired here. Lord Salisbury explained to me that the communication of our agreement with Austria, of which nothing was known here, and which would show how far we were engaged in this sense with Austria and how far England ought to engage herself according to the present proposals—a communication of this sort would meet the wishes of most of the Cabinet.

*German Note.*

After the German-Austro-Hungarian Treaty of 1879 only general information of the contents of the agreements had been handed to the British Government.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Salisbury then returned to the idea of a declaration in writing, to the effect that we approved of the 8 Points and recommended their acceptance by England. This would offer certain (BISMARCK: '*but quite inadequate*') reassurance that even in future German policy would not act in direct contradiction to the Constantinople Memorandum. (BISMARCK: '*The fact that our policy is founded on the impossibility of isolating ourselves with Russia and of being dependent on her, is stronger than any "approval" of the Points.*')

Lord Salisbury clearly and repeatedly declared in answer that no sort of obligation on our part to support the three Powers actively was thereby either expected or claimed. He announced with equal distinctness that he had no thought of estranging us by any indiscretion from Russia or even leading us into disagreement with her, and for this reason he was not only promising absolute secrecy with regard to the document in question, but would further take every possible step to prevent its falling into the hands of his successor, in the event of a change of Ministry. In anticipation of further suggestions on this point, he wondered whether Your Highness would be satisfied if the document were placed in Her Majesty's own hands and so entirely excluded from the archives of the Foreign Office. (BISMARCK: '*Being dealt with in so important a fashion would give it a treaty significance. We can declare our intention of neutrality, or say that none of the 8 Points is of a character to imperil our neutrality in the East.*')

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 102 et seq.

We then discussed the suggestion that our interest in maintaining Austria might supply the foundation for the desired reassurance. Lord Salisbury suggested that a small addition might perhaps be made to the agreement existing between us and Austria, for the reassurance of his colleagues. (BISMARCK: 'What?') He thought that this might not be objectionable to us, since it would only affect standing engagements, and thus there would be no suggestion of Germany's contracting obligations of more far-reaching character.

I stuck to my point that this desire of the British Ministers was quite unreasonable and scarcely capable of fulfilment. I did not conceal from Lord Salisbury that in consideration of the reasons I had mentioned, Your Highness might consider it necessary to recall that, in accordance with the well-understood interests of England, we have offered certain friendly advice to the British Government, and, if it thinks fit to attach impossible conditions to it, we must leave England to decide whether to let the favourable opportunity pass away unused, for securing her interests in the East by an understanding with the other two Powers.

In any case, I may humbly remark that I consider it advisable to throw cold water on the British hankering after our moral support. If Your Highness thinks it possible and commensurable with our interests to meet the British Cabinet's wishes in any form, my demeanour yesterday will have had the effect of damping off their hopes and preparing the British Ministers to accept a minimum. I think that such a minimum might be found, if Your Highness considers the matter sufficiently important, in offering a verbal and confidential declaration of our Agreement with Austria, and in admitting that we should not be against England's participation in that Agreement (BISMARCK: 'Ours and Austria's?') if Austria also agreed to it.

(BISMARCK: 'That would be going beyond Salisbury's proposals and would commit us to taking part in a war, the moment England was attacked by Russia!! Perhaps Count Kalnoky means our "approval of England's participation in the understanding" between Austria and Italy. That would be another matter altogether.'))

My reports written since my return to England will, I think, have given Your Highness the impression, which is more and more forced upon myself, that the British Cabinet's original hesitation in this affair was caused, not by the 8 Points, as was assumed on the occasion of my last visit to Berlin, but by the desire for further information and reassurance regarding our attitude and future conduct in the matter. (BISMARCK: 'Good.')

Under these circumstances it did not surprise me when Lord

Salisbury said on taking leave yesterday that he would wait for our reply, before making any definite pronouncement in Rome and Vienna concerning the proposed 8 Points. At the same time he handed me in confidence the document of which I enclose a copy. It sums up the points settled in yesterday's Cabinet, which would eventually form the basis for the answer which we should give at Rome and Vienna.

## IV. 373-4

*Enclosure*DRAFT OF THE BRITISH REPLY TO AUSTRIA-HUNGARY  
AND ITALY*Précis of proposed Reply to Eight Bases*

Points 1, 2, 3, 4. Her Majesty's Government fully concur in these statements of policy.

Point 5. Her Majesty's Government agree that the above principles forbid the Sultan actively or passively to delegate to another Power rights which have been secured by Treaties to himself or his subjects. But in their view such a delegation in Asia Minor would equally place Constantinople and the Straits at the mercy of such a Power; and therefore Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that any agreement of the proposed character should include not only Bulgaria but Asia Minor. (BISMARCK: '*France also?*')

Point 6. Great Britain is already associated with Turkey in defence of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire (and therefore of the principles above set forth) by virtue of the Treaty of Paris, confirmed by the Treaty of Berlin; and also by the Tripartite Treaty of 15th April, 1856.

Point 7. If, therefore, Turkey should resist an illegal enterprise at variance with these Treaties, Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to concert with Austria and Italy as to the mode of giving effect to the obligations of these Treaties.

Point 8. If in the judgment of the Three Powers the conduct of the Porte should amount to complicity with any such illegal enterprise, or to connivance at it, Great Britain will concur with the other two Powers in considering that existing Treaties justify them, or any of them, in occupying such Ottoman territory as they shall agree in thinking necessary for the purpose of securing the objects set forth in the preceding Articles. (BISMARCK: '*This contains nothing to make us depart from our neutrality.*')

## IV. 374

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
November 12th, 1887

*Secret.*

Provisional instruction on the telegram of November 11th  
from London.<sup>1</sup>

The German-Austrian Treaty may be communicated at once to Sir Edward Malet, so far as it has been communicated to the Russians. The Austrians are to be told that according to the exchange of opinions in the spring, we agreed in principle with Austria to give the Treaty greater publicity and that Austria only wished to proceed more slowly and gradually in the form of publication. In consequence of this we made our communication to Russia. It was more the business of Austria to do the same by England. It was our aim to avoid irritating England by refusal or hesitation on our part in this moment of crisis. But this aim would not be completely reached, if Austria failed to make the identical confidential communication to England. Austria's reticence would make a false impression on Lord Salisbury, as in England they do not rightly understand the importance of Treaties between real Monarchies.

## IV. 375

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
November 13th, 1887

I obtained to-day His Majesty's sanction for the *modus procedendi* recommended and had Malet and Eyssenstein to see me afterwards. Malet has received the version of the German-Austrian Treaty, as communicated to St. Petersburg, and promised emphatically to recommend it to Lord Salisbury. My overture has greatly pleased him.

Eyssenstein declared that Count Kalnoky would doubtless allow the three Articles, that the Tsar knows of, to be communicated to Lord Salisbury by the Austrian Embassy. Since messengers to London were few and far between, he offered to beg Kalnoky to telegraph meanwhile that this communication of the text of the Treaty, which we were making, was also to be made on the part of Austria.

The messenger leaves for London to-morrow evening.

His Majesty, who was very distrustful of Russia and was himself wonderfully fresh, went straight to the point and declared that he fully approved of encouraging the Mediterranean Powers. His Majesty said, 'My bodily strength is weak, but, thank God,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 336.



my head is quite clear, and your statement has interested me greatly.'

#### IV. 375-6

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
November 16th, 1887

*Secret.*

Lord Salisbury personally is entirely satisfied by the communication of the German-Austrian Agreement, and now has before him only the task of securing the sanction of certain prominent members of the Cabinet, in particular, Mr. Goschen; he entertains no doubt of his success. He will communicate with me in a day or two and intends then to despatch his definite answer to Rome and Vienna, in agreement with the enclosure to my despatch of November 12th.<sup>1</sup>

Count Karolyi, who has been prevented for some days by illness from visiting the Minister, has sent him word that he has been instructed to communicate the Treaty and that Count Kalnoky accepts the addition regarding Asia Minor.

The Austrian Ambassador spoke in terms of gratification in Vienna at Lord Salisbury's forthcoming attitude and feels no doubt that he honestly desired the understanding and would stand by it.

#### *German Note.*

Bismarck's letter to Lord Salisbury, given below, was translated into German for Foreign Office purposes and published in Otto Hamman's *Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (1918), p. 238 seq.

The immediate reason for this 'very unusual step' on Bismarck's part, as Holstein called it later on in a telegram addressed to Baron von Eckhardstein,<sup>2</sup> was Lord Salisbury's desire, as reported by Count Hatzfeldt on November 12th, 1887, for a written statement from Prince Bismarck, to serve as a 'certain reassurance' that German policy would not even in the future be in direct contradiction to that settled by the Constantinople Memorandum.<sup>3</sup> On November 18th Prince Bismarck telegraphed to Count Hatzfeldt as follows:

'Please express to Lord Salisbury my satisfaction at his communication and inform him that I intend shortly to explain the situation in a private letter.'

The letter was prepared with especial care. It was first drafted in German and then translated into French; then finally, after stringent correction both in German and French by Bismarck himself, a fair copy was prepared, which likewise received a number of improvements in Bismarck's hand. This careful drafting surely proves the high importance which Bismarck attached to it. It would, however, be quite incorrect to regard it, as has often happened, as an offer of alliance on Bismarck's part. Felix Rachfahl gives the true interpretation in his *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, Vol. XVI, p. 65 seq.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Lebenserinnerungen*, II, 282.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 340.

## IV. 376-7

PRINCE BISMARCK TO LORD SALISBURY, *November 22nd, 1887*

MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS,

Dans les pourparlers qui ont eu lieu entre Votre Excellence et le Comte Hatzfeldt afin de préciser l'appréciation anglaise de l'entente austro-italienne par rapport aux intérêts communs que ces deux Puissances ont en Orient, j'ai puisé la conviction qu'un échange d'idées direct entre nous pourrait être utile aux intérêts de nos deux pays, et contribuer à écarter de part et d'autre quelques-uns des doutes qui peuvent subsister au sujet des buts politiques que nous poursuivons de part et d'autre.

Nos deux nations ont en effet tant d'intérêts communs, et il y a un si petit nombre de points sur lesquels des divergences de vues peuvent se produire, que nous sommes à même d'admettre dans nos ouvertures mutuelles plus de franchise que les habitudes de notre diplomatie ne comportent. La confiance que nous avons de part et d'autre dans la loyauté personnelle l'un de l'autre nous permet de donner une étendue plus vaste encore à cette franchise. Au sujet de la politique anglaise la publicité de votre régime parlementaire nous offre une source suffisante d'informations, tandis que la manière moins transparente dont les affaires se traitent chez nous peut devenir une cause d'erreurs difficiles à éviter, comme par exemple celle, que commet Votre Excellence en exprimant l'appréhension que le Prince Guillaume pourrait, lorsqu'il tiendrait un jour les rênes du Gouvernement, incliner systématiquement à une politique hostile à l'Angleterre. Pareille chose ne serait pas possible en Allemagne—ni le contraire non plus. De même que Son Altesse Impériale le Prince de la Couronne ne voudrait et ne pourrait un jour, étant Empereur, faire dépendre sa politique d'inspirations anglaises, de même aussi le Prince Guillaume, se trouvant à sa place, ne penserait pas à faire et serait dans l'impossibilité de faire sa politique en suivant les impulsions venant de St. Pétersbourg. Les deux Princes lorsqu'ils seront appelés à régner, l'un et l'autre suivront exactement la même ligne de conduite ; en obéissant à leurs sentiments personnels aussi bien qu'à la force de la tradition monarchique ; ils ne voudront et ne pourront s'inspirer d'autres intérêts que de ceux de l'Allemagne. Or, la route à suivre pour sauvegarder ces intérêts est tracée d'une manière tellement rigoureuse qu'il est impossible de s'en écarter. Il ne serait pas raisonnable d'admettre, que le Gouvernement d'un pays de 50 millions d'habitants—considérant le degré de civilisation et la puissance de l'opinion publique existant en Allemagne—pourrait infliger à ce pays les souffrances qui accompagnent et suivent toute grande guerre, victorieuse ou non, sans fournir à la nation des

raisons assez graves et assez claires pour convaincre l'opinion publique de la nécessité de la guerre. Avec une armée telle que la nôtre, qui se recrute indifféremment dans toutes les classes de la population, qui représente la totalité des forces vives du pays et qui n'est que la nation en armes—avec une telle armée les guerres des siècles passés, résultant de sympathies, d'antipathies ou d'ambitions dynastiques, ne pourraient se faire. Depuis d'un quart de siècle l'Allemagne forme annuellement 150,000 soldats, de manière à pouvoir disposer aujourd'hui de 3 à 4 millions d'hommes, âgés de 20 à 45 ans et rompus au service militaire. Pour toute cette multitude d'hommes nous possédons, non seulement les armes et les objets d'équipement nécessaires, mais même les officiers et sous-officiers pour les conduire au combat. Nos cadres sont complets—avantage dont en fait d'officiers et de sous-officiers aucune autre nation ne pourrait se vanter.

Ces millions d'hommes sans exception accourent au drapeau et se placent sous les armes aussitôt qu'une guerre sérieuse menace l'indépendance nationale et l'intégrité de l'Empire. Mais ce grand appareil de guerre est trop formidable pour que, même dans notre pays, imbu du sentiment monarchique, il puisse être arbitrairement mis en branle par la simple volonté royale; il faudrait au contraire que les Princes et les Peuples de l'Empire soient unis dans la pensée, que la patrie, son indépendance et son unité récemment faite, se trouvent en danger, pour que ces grandes levées d'hommes puissent s'effectuer sans danger. Il s'ensuit que notre force militaire est en première ligne un appareil défensif, destiné à n'entrer en action que lorsque la nation aura acquis la conviction, qu'il s'agit de repousser une agression. L'Allemagne a peu d'aptitude à faire d'autre guerre qu'une guerre défensive. En appliquant ce qui précède à un cas spécial, il ressort de l'état des choses en Allemagne que le Gouvernement de l'Empire ne pourrait pas assumer devant la nation la responsabilité d'une guerre, dans laquelle d'autres intérêts que ceux de l'Allemagne se trouveraient en litige, comme par exemple ceux de l'Orient.—Le Sultan est notre ami et il a toutes nos sympathies; mais de là jusqu'à nous battre pour lui, il y a une distance que nous ne pourrions proposer au peuple allemand de franchir.

En faisant ces déclarations, je ne veux pas supposer que rien qu'une attaque directe contre nos frontières serait capable de justifier un appel aux armes des forces allemandes. L'Empire allemand a trois grandes puissances pour voisins, et ses frontières sont ouvertes. Il ne doit donc pas perdre de vue la question des coalitions qui pourraient se former contre lui. Si nous supposons l'Autriche vaincue, affaiblie ou devenue ennemie, nous serions isolés sur le continent de l'Europe en présence de la Russie et de la France, et en face de la possibilité d'une coalition

de ces deux puissances. Il est de notre intérêt d'empêcher même par les armes que pareil état de choses puisse s'établir.—L'existence de l'Autriche comme Grande Puissance forte et indépendante est une nécessité pour l'Allemagne à laquelle les sympathies personnelles du souverain ne peuvent rien changer.—L'Autriche, de même que l'Allemagne et l'Angleterre d'aujourd'hui, appartient au nombre des nations satisfaites, 'saturées' au dire de feu le prince Metternich et partant pacifiques et conservatrices. L'Autriche et l'Angleterre ont loyalement accepté le status quo de l'Empire allemand et n'ont aucun intérêt de le voir affaibli. La France et la Russie au contraire paraissent nous menacer ; la France en restant fidèle aux traditions des siècles passés qui la montrent comme ennemie constante de ses voisins, et par suite du caractère national des Français ; la Russie en prenant aujourd'hui vis-à-vis de l'Europe l'attitude inquiétante pour la paix européenne qui caractérisait la France sous les règnes de Louis XIV. et de Napoléon I. C'est d'un côté l'ambition des meneurs slaves à laquelle incombe la responsabilité de cet état de choses ; d'un autre côté il faut chercher les causes de l'attitude provocante de la Russie et de ses armées, dans les questions de sa politique intérieure : les révolutionnaires russes espèrent qu'une guerre étrangère les débarrassera de la monarchie ; les monarchistes au contraire attendent de cette même guerre la fin de la révolution. Il faut considérer aussi le besoin, d'occuper une armée oisive et nombreuse, de donner satisfaction à l'ambition de ses généraux, et de détourner vers la politique étrangère l'attention des libéraux qui demandent des changements de constitution. Vu cet état de choses nous devons considérer comme permanent le danger de voir notre paix troublée par la France et la Russie. Notre politique par conséquent tendra nécessairement à nous assurer les alliances qui s'offrent en vue de l'éventualité d'avoir à combattre simultanément nos deux puissants voisins : si l'alliance des puissances amies menacées par les mêmes nations belliqueuses nous faisait défaut, notre situation dans une guerre sur nos deux frontières ne serait pas désespérée ; mais la guerre contre la France et la Russie coalisées, en supposant même que comme exploit militaire elle finirait aussi glorieusement pour nous que la guerre de sept ans, serait toujours une assez grande calamité pour le pays pour que nous tâcherions de l'éviter par un arrangement à l'amiable avec la Russie s'il fallait la faire sans allié. Mais tant que nous n'avons pas la certitude d'être délaissés par les puissances dont les intérêts sont identiques aux nôtres, aucun empereur de l'Allemagne ne pourra suivre une autre ligne politique que celle de défendre l'indépendance des puissances amies, satisfaites comme nous de l'état actuel de l'Europe et prêtes à agir sans hésitations et sans faiblesses quand leur indépendance

serait menacée. Nous éviterons donc une guerre russe autant que cela sera compatible avec notre honneur et notre sécurité, et autant que l'indépendance de l'Autriche-Hongrie, dont l'existence comme Grande-Puissance est d'une nécessité de premier ordre pour nous, ne soit pas mise en question. Nous désirons que les puissances amies qui en Orient ont des intérêts à sauvegarder qui ne sont pas les nôtres, se rendent assez fortes par leur union et leur forces pour retenir l'épée de la Russie au fourreau ou pour y tenir tête en cas que les circonstances amèneraient une rupture. Tant qu'aucun intérêt de l'Allemagne s'y trouverait engagé, nous resterions neutres ; mais il est impossible d'admettre que jamais Empereur allemand puisse prêter l'appui de ses armes à la Russie pour l'aider à terrasser ou à affaiblir une des Puissances sur l'appui desquelles nous comptons, soit pour empêcher une guerre russe, soit pour nous assister à y faire face. A ce point de vue la politique allemande sera toujours obligée à entrer en ligne de combat, si l'indépendance de l'Autriche-Hongrie était menacée par une agression russe, ou si l'Angleterre ou l'Italie risquaient d'être entamées par des armées françaises. La politique allemande procède ainsi sur une route forcément prescrite par la situation politique de l'Europe et dont ni les antipathies, ni les sympathies d'un Monarque ou d'un ministre dirigeant pourraient la faire dévier.

Je me flatte de l'espoir que Votre Excellence voudra reconnaître la justesse des raisonnements de cet exposé que je viens de faire. Quant à moi, je le répète, j'y reconnais d'une manière tellement absolue les principes de la politique que l'Allemagne est et sera forcée de suivre, que les sympathies les plus chaleureuses pour une Puissance étrangère ou pour un parti politique quelconque ne pourraient cependant jamais offrir la possibilité à un Empereur allemand ou à son Gouvernement de s'en écarter.

Je prie Votre Excellence d'agréer l'expression de mes sentiments très-dévoués.

#### IV. 380

PRINCE BISMARCK TO LORD SALISBURY, *November 22nd, 1887*

I did not seal the enclosed letter without ascertaining Prince William's full approbation of it by reading out the whole content to His Royal Highness.

The Prince has just left me and I, to make assurance doubly sure, was anxious to add these few lines before starting for the country.

CHAPTER XXIV  
THE ENTENTE BETWEEN ENGLAND, ITALY  
AND AUSTRIA

(3) ENGLAND'S ADHESION TO THE ENTENTE

IV. 381

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*November 24th, 1887*

*Secret.*

The British reply to Rome and Vienna leaves this evening or early to-morrow morning by telegram for the British representatives there.

Articles 1-4 of the 8 Points are simply accepted, as shown in the enclosure to my report of November 12th. The wording of Article 5 in the enclosure is slightly altered and points emphatically to the importance of the Dardanelles, which are open to attack from Asia Minor also. There is an alteration in No. 6, mentioning the Treaties in general terms only, with the remark that England, who is already obliged by them to protect Turkey's integrity, observes with satisfaction that the other two Powers acknowledge the same policy. In No. 7 the inference is drawn that, when the case arises, England will join the other Powers in deciding on the measures to be adopted. No. 8 is unchanged. No. 9 contains the addition of absolute secrecy to be maintained against all Cabinets, including Turkey, regarding the agreement about to be concluded, except by special arrangement between the three Cabinets.

Lord Salisbury has promised me a copy of the altered Articles.

IV. 381

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 23rd, 1887*

*Secret.*

From expressions used by von Biegeleben (Counsellor of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy), who was instructed to visit me by the Ambassador, who is not yet quite recovered, I have received the impression that Austria considers it important to

inform the Sultan, as soon as possible, of the coming Agreement between Austria, Italy and England on the basis of the 8 Points drawn up in Constantinople ; or at least, to lose no time after the Agreement is concluded, in inviting the Sultan's adhesion to this group.

If I am right in thinking that the views of the Vienna Cabinet agree on this point with Baron von Biegeleben's words, I consider it my humble duty to point out in the interests of the case, that Lord Salisbury would probably raise serious objections to any such suggestion.

No argument can shake the British Prime Minister's deep conviction that Turkish discretion can never be trusted, (BISMARCK : '*Correct.*') and that any communication of the sort would immediately come to the knowledge of other Cabinets, (BISMARCK : '*Certainly.*') a possibility, which he will not risk for an instant. I am sure that he fears foreign complications arising out of premature indiscretions in Constantinople far less than the possibility of putting weapons into his opponents' hands here, and being exposed to attacks both in Parliament and out, which might embarrass and even shake his Government.

In my modest opinion it should not be overlooked that Lord Salisbury can never count on the support of all his colleagues for his foreign policy. He has succeeded, as Your Highness knows, in securing the agreement of Mr. W. H. Smith (First Lord of the Treasury) and Mr. Goschen. But the Premier tells me in confidence that the latter only agreed unwillingly and after hesitation. If Your Highness recollects Mr. Goschen's Gladstonian antecedents, and especially his attitude in Constantinople on the question of Montenegro and finally of Greece, it will not appear surprising, if he has not altogether cast off the views on British policy in the East that he then held, so far as to welcome without a struggle energetic action in the contrary sense on the part of Great Britain. Lord Salisbury on this question, as on every other, is dependent on the support of Lord Hartington's Party which is represented in the Cabinet by Mr. Goschen.

I should add that I shall soon be able to report in more detail on Mr. Goschen's views, as he has written to me from the country, where he is staying for a few days, hoping to discuss the situation with me in the near future.

In my last conversation with Lord Salisbury I found that Mr. Goschen's hesitation was for him another reason for guarding against Turkish indiscretions.

Moved by this consideration, he expressed to me his determination to introduce into the Agreement with the other two Powers some kind of arrangement to ensure secrecy all round (BISMARCK :

'*Right.*') and expressly to require a preliminary understanding between the Cabinets as to whether and when any step in the matter should be taken with the Sultan.

The importance that Lord Salisbury, for the reasons mentioned, attaches to some such clause, leaves me in no doubt that the conclusion of the Agreement would actually be easier arranged here, if he were certain that the other two Cabinets would be willing to meet his wishes by agreeing to this.

The Minister has asked me to visit him to-morrow for the purpose of discussing confidentially his reply to Vienna and Rome, the draft of which ought to be completed by then. He recently informed me of his intention to telegraph it to the British representatives, as soon as the text is settled, so as to avoid further loss of time.

*Postscript.*

I had to-day, shortly before the bag was closed, a confidential conversation with Mr. Goschen.

It is clear that he attaches the greatest importance to the absolute secrecy of the understanding between the three Powers, as he is convinced that a storm of public opinion would arise here against the Cabinet, if such an agreement became known. He did not disguise his anxiety lest the Austrian and especially the Italian Governments, which were not exposed to the same dangers in Parliament, might find it to their interest not to keep the secret so close, in the hope that, when the Russian Government found itself face to face with a Coalition of the three Powers, it would be obliged to maintain peace. Mr. Goschen, therefore, desires every possible guarantee of absolute secrecy.

The Minister referred secondly to Germany's attitude and gave me to understand that England, which was about to undertake great responsibilities under our advice, desired to be informed of the policy we intended to follow in the eventualities contemplated by the intended Agreement.

I repeated to Mr. Goschen the expressions used in my conversations with Lord Salisbury, following Your Highness' instructions, and explained that we had, as he knew, informed the Prime Minister of our Treaty with Austria which clearly explained our position. Mr. Goschen replied that he could form no proper opinion on that, as Lord Salisbury, to whom Your Highness had communicated a copy of the Treaty only as a personal favour, has scruples about showing him the text.

I humbly suggest that it would be a very good thing, if Your Highness should think fit to allow Sir Edward Malet to telegraph to the Prime Minister his permission to show to Mr. Goschen in confidence the copy that is in his hands. (BISMARCK: '*Yes.*')

Lord Salisbury feels embarrassment, as he told me a few days



ago, with regard to the Queen, as he does not feel justified in showing Her Majesty the text in question.

#### IV. 384

COUNT ZU RANTZAU, FRIEDRICHSRUH, TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26th, 1887*

*Secret.*

The Chancellor has just telegraphed to London the following: 'Secret. Report of 23rd received. I have no objection to communicating the Austrian Treaty either to Mr. Goschen or to Her Majesty the Queen and authorise you to do both. I consider the doubt, described in your report as to the Porte's discretion and Lord Salisbury's fears for the effects of such indiscretion on British politics to be well-founded, and I consider his demand for secrecy in Rome and Vienna to be comprehensible and justified. I am ready to speak in this sense in both capitals, when Lord Salisbury thinks the moment has come.'

#### IV. 385

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 20th, 1887*

*Secret.*

I beg leave to submit to Your Highness the enclosed copy of the telegram sent to the British Representatives in Vienna and Rome, which has been placed at my disposal by Lord Salisbury quite confidentially. It contains the British reply on the 8 Points of the Draft for an Agreement between England, Austria and Italy.

*Enclosure.*

A telegram to the following effect has been sent to Her Majesty's Representatives at Vienna and Rome.

*Private and most secret.*

Inform Minister for Foreign Affairs in reply to the 8 Bases that Her Majesty's Government are entirely in accord with the policy set forth in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Articles, and have nothing to add to them.

As regards the 5th Article, they observe that to the Mediterranean Powers the independent guardianship of the Straits is the most important of all the rights secured to the Sultan by the Treaties; that for the Porte to cede or delegate her rights in Bulgaria is chiefly dangerous because it threatens the independence of the Straits from the Western side; but that their independence would be equally threatened from the Eastern side by a cession or delegation of the Porte's rights in Asia Minor. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, think that the proposed understanding should apply equally to Bulgaria and Asia Minor.

In regard to Articles 6 and 7, Her Majesty's Government observe that Great Britain is bound already by Treaties in concert with her Allies to defend the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. It is, therefore, with much satisfaction that Her Majesty's Government learn that Austria and Italy are anxious to direct their own policy to the same end. In case, therefore, of Turkey resisting the illegal enterprises indicated in the 5th Article in Bulgaria or Asia Minor, Her Majesty's Government would concert with Austria and Italy on the manner in which effect is to be given to that obligation.

As regards the 8th Article the reply of Her Majesty's Government is, that if in the judgment of the three Powers the conduct of the Porte should amount to complicity with or connivance at any such illegal enterprise, Her Majesty's Government will concur in considering that the three Powers are justified in undertaking such joint or separate occupation of Turkish territory as they shall agree in thinking necessary in order to secure the objects set forth in the preceding Articles.

Any such understanding should also in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government include a promise not to disclose its existence to Turkey or any Power to whom it is not already known until the consent of all three Powers has been given to such disclosure.

*German Note.*

The following letter is given in German in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 16th, 1919. For the meaning of the letter, to which Prince Bismarck, to judge by the records, never again referred, see Holstein's telegram to Baron von Eckhardtstein on March 20th, 1891 (*Lebenserinnerungen*, II, 282).

IV. 386

LORD SALISBURY TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *November 30th, 1887*

*Private and most confidential.*

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the letter which Your Serene Highness has been good enough to write to me, under date of the 22nd of November. I am very thankful for the unreserved confidence by which that letter is inspired—a confidence which I cordially concur with Your Serene Highness in believing it fully justified by the sympathy, and the close coincidence of interest existing between our two nations.

It is right on that account that I should explain briefly the considerations which led me to entertain the apprehensions which I expressed to Count Hatzfeldt. If the lamentable event of a war between France and Germany should take place, Russia, if she was well-advised, would not take any step hostile to

Germany, but would at once, by occupying positions either in the Balkan peninsula, or in Asia Minor, compel the Sultan to assent to proposals which would make her mistress of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. She would only abstain from this step if threatened by a formidable resistance. Italy and England alone would not be sufficient to deter her : and it is very doubtful whether English public opinion would consent to go to war for Turkey with only Italy for an ally. All would depend, therefore, on the attitude of Austria. (BISMARCK : '*And Turkey.*') Unless she was certain of assistance from Germany, (BISMARCK : '*England*' substituted for '*Germany*'), she might not feel strong enough to hazard a war with Russia, and a consequent invasion on her North Eastern frontier where Italy and England could hardly help her. In that case she would sit still, and accept compensation in Turkish territory. (BISMARCK : '*? when without England!*') She has favoured that policy in former years : and even now it is reported, I know not with what truth, that the Emperor of Austria personally inclines to it. She could only take the opposite and bolder line, if she felt sure of the ultimate support of Germany. (BISMARCK : '*England*' substituted for '*Germany.*')

When, therefore, we were asked to join in an understanding upon the eight bases which were given to Sir Edward Malet, it became on consideration very evident that the one vital question to us was one which was not even alluded to in those eight bases—namely the probable attitude of Germany. If Austria could count on German support in such a struggle, it would be possible for her to carry out fully the policy indicated in the eight bases to which England was asked to adhere. In any other case England by giving this adhesion might be committing herself to a policy foredoomed to failure. We then asked ourselves what ground we had for assuming that Germany, engaged in a severe struggle with France, might not take a neutral (BISMARCK : '*Yes.*') line, or even a line favourable (BISMARCK : '*No.*') to Russia. Just at this time came the news that the succession to the German throne of a Prince who was believed to be more favourable to Russia and more averse to England than the present Heir to that throne, was a contingency which might arrive at an earlier date than was expected.

Your Serene Highness has removed my apprehensions by the great frankness with which you have exposed the true situation to me. You have in the first place allowed me to see the Treaty between Austria and Germany which established that under no circumstances could the existence of Austria be imperilled by a resistance to illegal Russian enterprises. In the second place you have conveyed to Sir Edward Malet, on the part of the Emperor, his moral approbation of any agreement which may be

come to by Austria, Italy and England on the three (BISMARCK : ' ? ' ) bases submitted to us : and in the third place you have convincingly explained to me that the course of Germany must be dictated by the considerations of national interest felt by the nation at large, and not by the personal prepossessions of the reigning Sovereign.

I believe that the understanding, into which England and the other two Powers are now prepared to enter, will be in complete accordance with her declared policy and will be loyally observed by her. The grouping of States, which has been the work of the last year will be an effective barrier against any possible aggression of Russia (BISMARCK : '*Especiallly if Turkey joins !*') and the construction of it will not be among the least services which Your Serene Highness has rendered to the Cause of European peace.

## IV. 388

COUNT ZU SOLMS-SONNENWALDE, AMBASSADOR IN ROME, TO  
PRINCE BISMARCK, *December 1st, 1887*

*Secret.*

At the Reception of the Diplomatic Corps to-day Signor Crispi informed me of Lord Salisbury's wish that no special Treaty should be concluded with regard to the *Entente à trois*, as this might mean embarrassments for him in Parliament, but that he would prefer the affair to be arranged by an exchange of Notes, with references to former Treaties, showing that the new Agreement is a natural consequence of them.

Signor Crispi, who agrees with this, wished to propose a reference in the Preamble of the Note to the Paris Treaty of 1856, in which the Powers guaranteed the maintenance of Turkey.

On leaving the Minister, I met the Austrian Ambassador in the ante-room, who told me that Lord Salisbury had proposed the exchange of Notes in Vienna, and that Count Kalnoky agrees to it ; but he demands that the *Entente à trois* be kept secret from Turkey, as her discretion cannot be relied on at all.

It appears that Lord Salisbury wishes to unite the 8 Points in one and the same Note, and not to treat the eighth separately.

About the fears regarding Turkish indiscretion, Signor Crispi had already spoken to me the day before yesterday.

## IV. 389

COUNT KALNOKY TO COUNT KAROLYI, AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR  
IN LONDON, *December 5th, 1887*

*Secret.*

Having assured myself of the Italian Cabinet's agreement with the additions to the 8 Points desired by Lord Salisbury, I

proceeded at once to draft the Notes, which are to be exchanged, and summoned Count Nigra (Italian Ambassador) to my assistance, hoping thus to obtain the Italian Government's agreement more swiftly. I send Your Excellency the draft composed in this manner. My governing thought in the work is that a similarly worded text can be exchanged by all three Cabinets, which will simplify the whole process and do away with the question of initiative.

Further, by referring to the Agreement of March 29th, 1887, (should be 23rd) <sup>1</sup> I took care to fit the preamble as closely as possible to the objects of the fresh Agreement, so as, while maintaining the 8 Points, to satisfy fully the wishes expressed by Lord Salisbury in the Memorandum, a copy of which was sent to you with the despatch of November 29th. Keeping it secret from Turkey is introduced into an extra Point, No. 9.

The proper method of exchanging these Notes would be for yourself and the Italian Chargé d'Affaires each to exchange the identically worded Notes with Lord Salisbury, whilst the exchange of the same Notes between ourselves and the Italian Cabinet might take place either in Rome or Vienna.

I beg that, when you are submitting the enclosed Draft to the Secretary of State and are recommending to him the foregoing *modus procedendi* you will say that we are naturally most ready to accept any verbal alterations or other desires, as to form, since the British Cabinet is in a more difficult position than the other two Cabinets owing to Parliamentary considerations.

I have also informed the Italian cabinet of it by telegram, and as I have no doubts regarding Signor Crispi's assent, your Italian colleague will probably now be in possession of the necessary instructions. If Lord Salisbury also accepts the draft and the *modus procedendi*, the exchange of Notes can take place without delay. Please inform me by telegraph of Lord Salisbury's reception of the draft and any desires he may express.

IV. 390

*Enclosure I.*

#### PROJET DE NOTE

A la suite de l'entente établie entre les Gouvernements de Sa Majesté, l'Empereur d'Autriche, Roi de Hongrie et de Leurs Majestés, la Reine du Royaume-Uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande et le Roi d'Italie, par l'échange de notes opéré à Londres le mois de mars 1887, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique est tombé d'accord avec les Gouvernements de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Italie sur l'adoption des points suivants, destinés à confirmer les principes établis par

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 306.

l'échange de notes précité et à préciser l'attitude commune des trois Puissances en prévision des éventualités qui pourraient se produire en Orient :

1. Maintien de la paix et exclusion de toute politique agressive.
2. Maintien du status quo en Orient fondé sur les traités, à l'exclusion de toute politique de compensations.
3. Maintien des autonomies locales établies par ces mêmes traités.
4. Indépendance de la Turquie, gardienne d'intérêts Européens importants, (indépendance du Chalifat, liberté des Détroits, etc.) de toute influence étrangère prépondérante.
5. Par conséquent la Turquie ne peut ni céder ni déléguer ses droits suzerains sur la Bulgarie à une autre puissance, ni intervenir pour y établir une administration étrangère, ni tolérer des actes de coercition entrepris dans ce dernier but, sous forme soit d'occupation militaire, soit d'envoi de volontaires. De même la Turquie, constituée par les traités gardienne des Détroits, ne pourrait non plus céder aucune portion de ses droits souverains, ni déléguer ses pouvoirs à une puissance en Asie Mineure.
6. Désir des trois Puissances de s'associer le Turquie pour la défense commune de ces principes.
7. En cas de résistance de la Turquie à des entreprises illégales telles qu'elles se trouvent indiquées dans l'article 5, les trois Puissances se mettront aussitôt d'accord sur les mesures à prendre pour faire respecter l'indépendance de l'Empire Ottoman et l'intégrité de son territoire, telle qu'elles sont consacrées par les traités antérieurs.
8. Si cependant la conduite de la Porte, de l'avis des trois Puissances, prenait le caractère de complicité ou de connivence avec une pareille entreprise illégale, les trois Puissances se considéreront comme justifiées par les traités existants à procéder, soit conjointement, soit séparément, à l'occupation provisoire par leurs forces de terre ou de mer de tels points du territoire Ottoman qu'elles reconnaîtront d'accord nécessaire d'occuper à l'effet d'assurer les buts déterminés par les traités antérieurs.
9. L'existence et le contenu du présent accord entre les trois Puissances ne devront être révélés à la Turquie ni à d'autres puissances qui n'en auraient pas déjà été informées, sans le consentement antérieur de toutes et de chacune des trois Puissances susdites.

Le soussigné Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie a été chargé par son Gouvernement de signer la présente note et de l'échanger contre une note identique du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique.

## IV. 391

*Enclosure II*

COUNT KALNOKY TO COUNT SZÉCHÉNYI, AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN  
AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN

*Copy.*

According to a telegram from Count Karolyi, Lord Salisbury objects to the form of the identical note, as regards England. He wishes, following the precedent of March, 1887, to have the power to furnish his reply independently with arguments adapted to England and having reference mainly to Parliament. His objections deal only with the wording and do not touch the substance in any way.<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury considers, therefore, that we and Italy should address the identical Notes to him and so mark the initiative. Then the British Cabinet would reply to both representatives in the same terms.

Count Karolyi has been at once informed that we, in deference to the British Cabinet's desire, accept this mode on the assumption that the British reply agrees fully in essentials with ours. I have at the same time informed Signor Crispi of this and asked for his assent to it.

## IV. 392

COUNT HATZFELDT TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*December 9th, 1887*

*Secret.*

The British Draft reply to the identical Notes, which Lord Salisbury has shown me in confidence and before discussing it with Count Karolyi, contains references to Parliament and public opinion with respect to England's Treaty policy, and the necessity of maintaining the independence of the Christian populations in the East, as well as the freedom of the Dardanelles. At the end the Minister declares, in the name of the British Government, its full agreement with the identical Note of the two Powers.

As a consequence of our conversation, Lord Salisbury has amplified the ending by annexing the exact wording of the 9 Points to which the English agreement applies, as given in the text of the identical Notes.

I consider the British declaration satisfactory.

If this opinion is not shared in Vienna, I think that Lord Salisbury may certainly be induced to write a special note of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 306.

explanation, defining more exactly the meaning of the word 'adhesion' with reference to a change of Government in England.

I hope to be able to despatch the text of the British Note by messenger to-morrow.

#### IV. 392-3

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *December 10th, 1887*  
*Secret.*

I beg to enclose a copy of the British Note agreed upon between Lord Salisbury and Count Karolyi.

At the request of the Austrian Ambassador, the Prime Minister has, in the third paragraph, dealing with Article V, substituted 'the independent liberties of the Christian communities'<sup>1</sup> for 'independency', (*sic*) in order to include Bulgaria. In the sentence following, 'the liberties of these communities'<sup>1</sup> is substituted for 'independency' for the same reason.

*Enclosure.*

*Most secret.*

#### PROPOSED REPLY

Her Majesty's Government have considered the points commended to their acceptance by the identic note of the Austro-Hungarian and Italian Governments.

The three Powers have already communicated to each other their conviction that it is their common interest to uphold the existing state of things upon the shores of the Mediterranean and the adjoining seas. The four first points recited in the note are in strict conformity with this understanding, as well as with the policy which has always been pursued by the Government of Great Britain.

The fifth, sixth and seventh points refer to certain special dangers by which the state of things established by Treaties, and the interests of the three Powers in the East, may be menaced; and to the course which should be pursued if those dangers should arise. The illegal enterprises anticipated by the fifth Article would affect, especially, the preservation of the Straits from the domination of any other Power but Turkey, and the independent liberties of the Christian communities on the northern border of the Turkish Empire, established by the Treaty of Berlin. Her Majesty's Government recognise, that the protection of the Straits and the liberties of these communities are objects of supreme importance, and are to Europe among the most valuable results of the Treaty; and they cordially concur with the Austro-Hungarian and Italian Governments in taking special precautions to secure them.

<sup>1</sup> English in the text.



The eighth point provides against a contingency which, without technical illegality, may frustrate the object of the Treaties altogether. It is necessary, however, to avoid a premature publicity, which might precipitate the lapse of Turkey into that state of vassalage from which it is the aim of the three Powers to protect her.

In view of these considerations the Undersigned etc., is charged by Her Majesty's Government to communicate to the Austro-Hungarian Government their entire adhesion to the nine points recited in the identic note of the two Powers, that is to say :—

1. The maintenance of peace to the exclusion of all policy of aggression.

2. The maintenance of the status quo in the East based on the Treaties, to the exclusion of all policy of compensation.

3. The maintenance of the local autonomies established by these same Treaties.

4. The independence of Turkey, as guardian of important European interests; the Caliphate, the freedom of the Straits etc., to be independent of all foreign preponderating influence.

5. Consequently, Turkey can neither cede nor delegate her rights over Bulgaria to any other Power, nor intervene in order to establish a foreign Administration there, nor tolerate acts of coercion undertaken with this latter object, under the form either of a military occupation, or of the dispatch of volunteers. Neither will Turkey, who has by the Treaties been constituted guardian of the Straits, be able to cede any portion of her sovereign rights, nor delegate her authority to any other Power in Asia Minor.

6. The desire of the three Powers to be associated with Turkey for the common defence of these principles.

7. In case of Turkey resisting any illegal enterprises such as are indicated in Article V, the three Powers will immediately come to an agreement as to the measures to be taken for causing to be respected the independence of the Ottoman Empire and the integrity of its territory as secured by previous Treaties.

8. Should the conduct of the Porte, however, in the opinion of the three Powers, assume the character of complicity with or connivance at any such illegal enterprise, the three Powers will consider themselves justified by existing Treaties in proceeding either jointly or separately to the provisional occupation by their forces, military or naval, of such points of Ottoman territory as they may agree to consider it necessary to occupy in order to secure the objects determined by previous Treaties.

9. The existence and the contents of the present Agreement between the three Powers shall not be revealed either to Turkey

or to any other Powers who have not yet been informed of it without the previous consent of all and each of the three Powers aforesaid.

#### IV. 395

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *February 11th*, 1888

Yesterday in the House of Commons Labouchère (an extreme Radical) asked whether the British Government had concluded an engagement in view of a future event or generally with Italy or any other Foreign Power in the previous year, and, if this was the case, whether the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would lay before the House documents relating to such an engagement or engagements.

Sir James Fergusson replied that the British Government was committed to no agreement, binding the country to material action, which was not known to the House.

To Labouchère's question whether there was a difference between action and material action, the Under-Secretary replied that material action meant a military commitment.

To-day's *St. James's Gazette* publishes a remarkable leading article, expressing regret that it must be assumed from the Government's announcement yesterday that no engagement has been concluded with Italy, seeing that such an engagement would be in accordance with the country's interests and the wishes of the nation.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE BATTENBERG MARRIAGE QUESTION

#### *German Note.*

On March 31st, 1888, Prince Alexander of Battenberg (late Prince of Bulgaria) was summoned by telegraph to come to the Emperor Frederick on Easter Monday. There is no evidence in the records that this had any connection with any proclamation of a marriage engagement, but the fact is certainly placed beyond doubt by the detailed information in E. C. Corti's *Alexander of Battenberg*, p. 325 seq. The reports of Baron v. Thielmann, Prussian Minister at Darmstadt, which are supported by statements by the Grand Duke of Hesse, show that it had not been the Prince's intention on the occasion of this visit to apply for the hand of Princess Victoria, the Emperor Frederick's daughter.

#### VI. 281

PRINCE BISMARCK TO VON SCHWEINITZ, AMBASSADOR AT  
ST. PETERSBURG, *April 4th*, 1888

His Majesty the Emperor informed me on March 31st that Prince Alexander of Battenberg is expected on a visit to Charlottenburg on April 2nd. The visit has been put off by telegraph at my request, but I do not know if it is formally prevented. I have asked leave to resign, in case it comes off. Please telegraph to me whether you and M. de Giers share my opinion, that this visit, which I suspect to have been suggested by the Queen of England, would in Russia make the impression of an anti-Russian demonstration and of a change in our present policy. Public opinion here would certainly imagine it.

#### VI. 287

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE EMPEROR FREDERICK III, *April 4th*,  
1888

The fact that I am making an addition to my interim report of yesterday may cause Your Majesty graciously to realise the keenness of my anxiety regarding the reactions of this question on politics. If Your Majesty had not forbidden this visit, the Prince would have arrived here two days ago. I think that the

first consequence of this event would have been a distinct set-back of German and Russian Government Stocks. Public opinion here and in other countries would have received a general impression that by the invitation and acceptance of the visit an anti-Russian demonstration was intended, and so a change in our previous friendly policy. The Prince's whole position would make it impossible for him to appear before Your Majesty without an invitation. Public opinion would not imagine any reason, other than political, for an express invitation of the Prince. But it would imagine that a new course was being adopted towards Russia, from which, once entered upon, it would be difficult to draw back with honour. If no kind of change took place, the Press of both countries concerned and of France would have a fresh opportunity for developing further the Russian annoyance at the Battenberg invitation. In Germany where public opinion just now is setting special store on peace, it would not be understood at all why our relations towards Russia should be wantonly prejudiced in order to do honour to a Battenberg Prince, for Germany has nothing to hope for from his good-will, whereas from the ill-will of the Tzar a greater likelihood of war is to be feared. In order to provide an explanation for the incomprehensible set-back to the country's interests, so little in accordance with the tradition of the Royal House, it would ascribe it to personal reasons and would imagine that the unexpected change in our policy had been brought about not by purely German suggestions, but by English influence.

It would be assumed that it is Queen Victoria who prompted and encouraged the Prince of Battenberg. These suppositions have a strong political connection, apart from the personal relations of Her Majesty with the Battenberg family. For it is of real advantage to British policy to promote disagreements between Germany and Russia. A Russo-German war would make it easier for England to guard her interests as against Russia. But for Germany a war with Russia, whether victorious or the opposite, is ever a great calamity, and the nation looks confidently to Your Majesty to prevent it. If the public could imagine that this confidence had been betrayed out of good-will to England, or for personal and dynastic reasons, the dissatisfaction it would cause would not be unjustified and would be hard to allay. The Emperor Alexander's sensitiveness on the Battenberg subject arises partly from the fact that for a short time there was an idea of cancelling the attendance of the Czariwitch at the funeral of the late Emperor, as it was thought that the former Prince of Bulgaria was to be there. At the time Count Shouvaloff thought that this rumour had been invented by the anti-German party in Russia, in order to prevent the Czariwitch from attending and

to stop the impression of friendliness to Germany which would result from it. He did not doubt that he also would not have attended if he had had to meet the Prince of Battenberg here.

# VI. 289

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *April 5th, 1888*

I fear that the plan to marry the Prince of Battenberg to our Princess Victoria is about to be urged more strongly again by the English and by Queen Victoria in person. Please inform Lord Salisbury in confidence that the success of this project would force German policy necessarily and permanently into a pro-Russian channel, far more surely than if no family connection with Battenberg and Bulgaria were on the tapis; especially if a war development brought the Prince back to Bulgaria.

## *German Note.*

The result of the above démarche was that Lord Salisbury directed the British Ambassador in Berlin to communicate Bismarck's objection to the marriage direct to Queen Victoria. If necessary, he was ready to recommend the greatest reserve to the Queen.

# VI. 289

SCHWEINITZ, AMBASSADOR IN ST. PETERSBURG TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 5th, 1888*

I mentioned to M. de Giers the possibility of a visit to Charlottenburg by Prince Alexander of Battenberg. He replied:

'Dans l'opinion publique cette visite rencontrerait une interprétation fausse et défavorable. Toutefois, si elle avait lieu, bien que nous la regretterions, nous garderions notre conviction que tant l'Empereur Frédéric que le Prince Chancelier ne changeraient pas leur politique amicale pour la Russie et qu'ils resteraient fidèles à notre arrangement concernant la non-admission du Prince Alexandre au pouvoir en Bulgarie.' He added that he would submit my communication to His Majesty and inform me whether the Emperor shared his purely personal opinion.

I think that the foremost desire of the St. Petersburg Cabinet is to see the hostility and continuity of our policy broken up, even more than its dislike of the Prince of Battenberg and its anxiety as to the results of his return to prominence. I also think that the Russian press will represent the Prince's visit as an anti-Russian demonstration and an encouragement to all Russia's rivals, who would begin slighting us almost without disguise and would re-open their leanings towards France which had been waning of late, in a way likely to disturb the peace.

VI. 331

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, ON BOARD THE  
*Hohenzollern* AT CRONSTADT, July 25th, 1888

*Extract.*

In the course of conversation I said to the Tsar :

. . . ' In the English Royal Family and its nearest collaterals there is a sort of worship of the undiluted family principle and Queen Victoria is regarded as a kind of absolute Chief of all branches of the Coburg clan. It is associated with codicils, which are shown to the obedient relation from afar. (Here the Tsar laughed heartily.) Besides this there is the traditional British policy of stirring up trouble and strife on the Continent and profiting by making difficulties for the other Great Powers. With this end in view last autumn the Prince of Wales blackened the young Emperor's character directly to Your Majesty and also by other means that he has at his disposal, in order to arouse mutual suspicion. Also the Queen wrote to the Kaiser 3 days before our departure for St. Petersburg to dissuade him from making the journey. His Majesty, however, is tired of this unsolicited advice and replied to the Queen in such unmistakable terms that a repetition of it could scarcely come to pass. . . . '

VI. 346

MEMORANDUM BY COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, IN VIENNA,  
October 5th, 1888

*Extract.*

The Austrian Emperor then turned to the subject of the Empress Frederick and the English Royal Family. He judged the character and activities of the Empress, as one would expect that experienced Monarch to do, and expressed the fear that her influence in her own private circle and in the English Royal Family might embitter the relations between English and German policy. I denied this and in proof, to cut a long story short, referred to a long confidential conversation I had had with Kalnoky a few days before on this very subject. It was to the effect that our Emperor was well able to estimate the importance of England's prestige in the European game and did not dream of allowing the presumption, which must be ascribed to the English Royal Family, to affect our relations towards the British Government. It should not be forgotten that democracy ruled in England through the Prime Minister for the time being and his colleagues. Any influence that Queen Victoria might enjoy was due to Lord Salisbury's loyal adherence to the half-forgotten Tory tradition in allowing the Queen a certain amount of authority.

When I was officially in England in Gladstone's time, the Queen was treated simply as a machine for signing, and it would be so again after the next General Election, which would see the end of the old Toryism. The tinsel of the so-called British Monarchy was *une quantité négligeable*. If one refrained from direct insult, our relations to the occupant of the throne would in future be completely immaterial to our relations with the English nation.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### BISMARCK'S OFFER OF ALLIANCE TO ENGLAND, 1889

SAMOA, ZANZIBAR AND HELIGOLAND, 1889

LORD SALISBURY'S SUSPICION OF A RUSSO-AUSTRIAN  
ENTENTE

#### IV. 399

[The Crown Prince succeeded his father as Emperor on March 9th, 1888, and died on June 15th of the same year, when William II ascended the Throne.]

For some time Russo-German relations had been growing steadily worse. A series of measures of reprisal caused Prince Bismarck to begin looking for an Ally to take Russia's place in his scheme of European balance of power. As Russia and France were drawing nearer together, his thoughts turned towards England.]

#### IV. 177

[In April, 1888, Queen Victoria spent two days in Berlin on a visit to the Emperor Frederick III and the Empress.]

PRINCE BISMARCK TO PRINCE HENRY VII OF REUSS, AMBASSADOR  
IN VIENNA, *April 28th*, 1888

The Queen gave me a long audience, and I received a very satisfactory impression from my conversation with Her Majesty. As far as an English Queen, in the absence of Her Ministers and without consulting them, may constitutionally speak her mind on political questions, she did so to me, in that she frankly expressed her sympathy with the peace policy of the three Central Powers. I found that Her Majesty thoroughly understood the objects of our foreign policy, and she made it unmistakably clear, whilst recognising Lord Salisbury's analogous point of view, that her influence, so far as it lay, would be to throw the weight of England into the balance of that side which was known to be solidly in favour of peace. The Queen expressed her agreement with our foreign policy, and I am convinced that we can count upon her good understanding even in serious problems, as far as her influence reaches. It especially pleased me that the Queen refrained during my audience from



any attempt to interfere in our home politics. In case she was possibly not free from anxiety regarding the future policy of his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, I took pains, and I think with success, to convince the Queen that the Crown Prince would not initiate trouble, and that when it was forced upon him, he would handle it reasonably, and that he is too clever to cultivate prejudices in any direction in European politics or to follow any impulse but that of the high interests of Germany.

VI. 209

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *April 28th*,  
1888

*Confidential.*

The Chancellor has read your despatch of April 24th with interest. He realises that, in consideration for public opinion in England, the English coast must not be weakened. Lord Salisbury's intended scheme for strengthening the Mediterranean Fleet makes it unnecessary to consider the question for the moment. Our object in suggesting the increase of the Mediterranean Fleet will be attained by Lord Salisbury's intention of attaching some of the ships, returning from the Far East, to it, and I beg you to express our satisfaction at this news to Lord Salisbury.

As regards the final sentence of your report, the Chancellor thinks the moment has arrived for Lord Salisbury to leave the French in no doubts as to England's attitude in the event of a sudden French attack upon Italy. It is a perfect fact that England has the power of preventing the outbreak of a Franco-Italian war, which we also have pressing reasons for avoiding. Our treaty relations with Italy have been sufficiently published abroad, for France to have no doubt that we should come to Italy's assistance, if she were attacked by France. If now England makes it clear in Paris that a declaration of war by her would follow a French attack on Italy, I consider that it would be the surest way to frustrate it.

If England delays this warning until hostilities actually break out, it will be impossible to prevent the war. Then only repressive measures, and not preventive ones, can be taken. As far as we are in a position to judge of affairs in France, the moment has now arrived when a declaration of England's attitude may exercise a decisive influence on the relations between France and Italy. She should not wait till the dam is about to burst, but rather prevent it by diplomatic means. I have spoken in strict confidence in this sense to Sir Edward Malet, and beg you to do the same on your part, urging that 'prevention is better than cure'.

## IV. 399

COUNT VON BERCHEM, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, TO  
COUNT HATZFELDT, *August 21st, 1888*

*Confidential.*

The Chancellor has read with interest the detailed reports of Captain Schröder, which have been in your hands and which give a depressing picture of England's unreadiness for war. His conviction is strengthened that England's only security against French attacks lies in her good relations with Germany.

France can do nothing against England, unless we allow it. If we attack her on the East, she must renounce all thoughts of war or even of any military demonstration against England at the same time.

If, however, we do this, France would probably find support in Russia. The resulting situation would contain nothing desperate for us, but it would be too serious to burden the German Empire with it without absolute necessity. If, on the other hand, England were our sure Ally and also as strong as potentially she ought to be, if she would make the effort, without which she cannot remain a Great Power for ever, we might then safely assume that the Powers, that are working for peace—Germany, Austria, Italy and England,—would be strong enough to nullify any attempts on the part of the bellicose Powers—France and Russia. If England refuses to make any efforts towards efficiency, she naturally cannot count on our reciprocity in the hour of her need.

If England were not merely pacific, but also strong, she would not lack friends in Europe. But so long as she is merely pacific and expects to exploit foreign resources whilst sparing her own finances, she can only count on her Allies, when it suits their convenience.

I beg to send you these remarks of the Chancellor's for your information in confidence at present. There is no instruction with regard to them; but the Chancellor recommends you to speak confidentially in the foregoing sense to any British statesmen, who you may think likely to understand you and with whom you are on friendly terms.

## IV. 400

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *January 11th, 1889*

During your visit to Friedrichsruh (January 5th to 7th) I requested you, when you next found an opportunity for private conversation with Lord Salisbury, to express to him my conviction that the surest way to obtain peace, which England and Germany equally desire, or even the respite required by us for arming with

a view to the magnitude of coming wars, will be the conclusion of a Treaty between England and Germany, binding both Powers for a limited period to combined resistance against a French attack.<sup>1</sup> If a secret Treaty of that kind were possible, both parties would obtain a considerable promise of security against the result of such a war, whilst the avoidance of war might be expected from its publication.

England and Germany are not threatened with an attack by any Power except France. Nothing but Austro-Russian complications could drive Germany into war with Russia, and as a war even at the best offers Germany no acceptable compensation, we must do our utmost to avoid Austria being involved in war.

The only element, threatening to these two friendly powers, is seen to be France, the only neighbour common to both. Neither possesses any other dangerous neighbour in common. England possesses divergent interests with North America and Russia, as well as with France. But a war with one of those Powers, even with both at once, can only threaten England's life, if France is allied with England's enemies. And America's demeanour towards England would be more cautious than it was on the Canadian and Sackville questions, if the Americans had to anticipate that they would have to face a break with England in isolation, and without the material or moral assistance of France. The only practical means to prevent America from counting on France in a quarrel with England, is the certainty that France would not be able to undertake an attack on England without being attacked herself by a German army of over a million men. America will not be inclined to give expression by war to the chauvinistic tendencies of her future Government and her former unfriendlinesses towards England, unless French support is at some time assured to her. British foreign policy will enjoy freedom of movement in all directions, if only she is fully protected from the French war-danger by alliances. Even then, if such alliances are only concluded for the short period required by England for the restoration of her fighting power on the sea, I should think that the promise they will give of absolutely certain peace for one or more years, may be of great service to all peace-loving Powers. It is not an affair of gaining strength in case of war, but of preventing war. Neither France nor Russia will break the peace, if they are told officially that, if they do so, they will at once find England against them for a certainty. They will only break it, if they are allowed to hope that it may be possible to attack the peaceable nations of Europe one after the other. Once it is clearly understood that England would be protected against a French attack by a German alliance and Germany against a French

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 345, 353.

attack by an English alliance, I consider the peace of Europe assured for the duration of such a published Treaty.

It is questionable whether the conviction that European peace can be considered as assured for a limited period may not be bought too dearly at the price of obtaining the sanction of the public and Parliament for a defensive Alliance in the interests of peace.

My idea is that, if His Majesty assents, an Alliance should be concluded between the British and German Governments, binding them to mutual support, supposing that in the course of 1, 2, or 3 years, as the case may be, France should attack either of the two, and that this Treaty, which would be binding on Germany even without the Reichstag's consent, should be submitted to the English Parliament for approval and publicly communicated to the German Reichstag.

I think that a frank, manly step in this direction would produce an easing and calming effect not only in England and Germany, but also all over Europe, and would win for the British Government the reputation of being the Safe Deposit of the world's peace.

England's maritime supremacy requires a continental alliance just as much now as in the last century, and the immense increase in the continental armies has made this requirement even greater than formerly. Taking into consideration the improved means of communication, the possibility, in the absence of such an alliance, of a French invasion of England becomes a question depending on risks of storms, on emotions and the momentary strength of fighting forces in the Channel. With England and Germany in alliance, France is in no position to plan a workable scheme against England in combination with the defence of her Eastern frontier against a German invasion.

I consider it unprofitable for England to carry a policy of non-intervention so far that every continental Power, and Germany in particular, is obliged to see to its future security with England left out of account. If once the conviction that this state of things was to be permanent, took definite root, Germany would be forced to seek her own salvation in such international relations, as she can obtain without England. In politics a course once decided upon is not easy to change.

For this reason I beg you meanwhile to ask Lord Salisbury in my name whether he thinks it possible, in the interests of England and his own Government, on whose continuance I lay great importance, to take into consideration the ideas mentioned above, and to sound the most influential of his friends as to their practicability.

This is by no means a *mise en demeure*, and if Lord Salisbury

denies that my road can be traversed on English soil, my confidence in his policy and my friendship for himself will in no wise be shaken. My only wish is to examine along with him whether, by publicly and boldly recognising Europe's need for peace, and by recommending it in Parliament, as I suggest, we can put off war at any rate *pro tempore*, perhaps for a long time.

If Lord Salisbury decides to answer in the negative, I shall confidently accept his judgment on whatever he, as a British Minister, feels to be possible, and our relations will remain as before. But I believe that this policy, as I have explained it, is the very one for the assurance of peace and also for the strengthening of his own position, if he will consent to go forward openly and officially in Parliament in the sense that I suggest. Lord Salisbury may express his views to me without embarrassment, as I am not able so far to discuss the question in the name of the Emperor, my Master. Before I ask for the Emperor's authority, I should be glad to know first what Lord Salisbury thinks of it. I can expose myself, but not the Emperor, to a refusal.

I expect no immediate reply to this, but shall wait as long as is required by Lord Salisbury to determine his own opinion and that of his political allies before reporting on the matter to the Emperor, my Master.

#### IV. 403

COUNT HATZFELD'T TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *January 16th, 1889*  
*Secret.*

At my first interview yesterday with Lord Salisbury since my return I was able to discuss the despatch of January 11th and to carry out the commission laid upon me by Your Highness.

The Prime Minister realised at once the high political importance of the suggestion which I had to introduce to him and saw in it a fresh and valuable proof that Your Highness is striving for, and considers essential, a close bond between the two Powers in the interests of European peace.

Lord Salisbury thinks that he may postpone a detailed statement on the proposal, which I enunciated in 'Your Highness' name, until he has found time for that ripe consideration, which a matter so far-reaching and so vital for England makes obligatory. As a significant proof of the serious light in which the Minister views the matter, I should mention that he readily accepted the suggestion of sounding the leaders amongst his political friends in confidence, so as to learn with certainty how far the British Government may count on their assent and particularly on their parliamentary support. The attitude that Lord Salisbury must adopt towards the question will depend, as things stand here, on the result of these conversations. As far as I can now judge, it is

not impossible that a counter-proposal may arise out of them, which may suggest some modification of the idea, without declining it in principle.

Your Highness may rest assured that I shall watch the matter carefully, and shall not fail to direct all my powers towards obtaining the best possible developments, at the same time avoiding any appearance of pressure or impatience on our part.

I must not fail to add that Lord Salisbury wishes the whole matter to be treated as strictly confidential, (BISMARCK: 'Good.') and that he means, therefore, for the moment to communicate it neither to the Foreign Office nor even to Her Majesty the Queen.

*German Note.*

Bismarck's offer of alliance was accompanied by a speech in the Reichstag, sympathetic to England, on January 26th, 1889.—'I think of England as the old traditional Ally, whose interests do not clash with ours.—I use the word "Ally" not in its diplomatic sense, for we have no treaties with England,—but I desire to cling to the friendship that we have enjoyed for at least five hundred years with England, even in Colonial questions. If I were warned that we are losing it, I should take precautions to avoid doing so.'<sup>1</sup>

*German Note.*

Count Herbert Bismarck, the Foreign Minister, arrived in London on March 21st, 1889, on a special mission in order to settle finally various outstanding questions with the British Government; and in particular, the Samoan question, which had again become acute since the unrest in Samoa, in December, 1888.

IV. 404-5

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
March 22nd, 1889

*Secret.*

I talked in confidential terms with Lord Salisbury for 1½ hours. He was deeply moved by His Majesty's expressions of friendship and is very much pleased at the plan of a visit to Osborne for the end of July. He said that for every reason the very end of July would suit best for His Majesty's arrival, so that Cowes Week should coincide with it as far as possible. His Majesty would be received with all pomp, but there would be no ball.

*German Note.*

A German squadron was to escort the Emperor, and there was to be a joint naval demonstration. This took place on August 5th.

We discussed the probable effect of the joint naval demonstration on France and America, the relations of England and Germany towards France, and finally the possibility of an Anglo-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bismarck's Political Speeches* (H. Kohl), Vol. XII, 375.

German Alliance, open or secret. Lord Salisbury entirely agreed with me that this would be the best tonic for both countries and for European peace. He had spoken about it to Lord Hartington and his colleagues, all of whom had shared his opinion, but considered it inopportune to act upon the suggestion, since it would cause the Parliamentary majority to collapse, carrying the Ministry with it.

Lord Salisbury added: 'We live no longer, alas, in Pitt's times; the aristocracy governed then and we were able to form an active policy, which made England after the Congress of Vienna the richest and most respected Power in Europe. Now democracy is on top, and with it the personal and party system, which reduces every British Government to absolute dependence on the *aura popularis*. This generation can only be taught by events.'<sup>1</sup> I was forced to agree with Lord Salisbury, I am sorry to say. I replied: 'We expected that you would not be able to give us a definite answer, and you know that it does not affect our good relations in the least. Since, however, an Anglo-German alliance is in itself a reasonable idea, and since you in England can never make the original offer, however much you wish to do so, the Chancellor considered himself bound to ask permission from the Emperor, at any rate to mention the matter.'

At this, Lord Salisbury declared he was very grateful for the suggestion and hoped that he would live to see changed conditions, so that he might be able to give it practical consideration. 'Meanwhile, we leave it on the table, without saying yes or no; that is unfortunately all I can do at present.'<sup>2</sup>

I said, further, that we had desired to offer England this point of contact, in order to cover our responsibility in High Politics.

There might one day be a grouping of the Powers, in which France would be craving our neutrality, meaning to measure her strength against England, whilst England might be offering compensation in some form to Russia at the same time. If in that case we are convinced that we can never count upon England, England might possibly be left in isolation and have to pay for the breakages.

Lord Salisbury replied that he had been saying this for a long time, and so it was all the more distressing to him that Parliamentary considerations reduced his Government to such impotence. The only course possible meanwhile was to go hand in hand with us as publicly as might be, and he was rejoiced to learn that we understood his situation and were demanding nothing further from him at present.

<sup>1</sup> The last sentence in English.

<sup>2</sup> English in the text.

*German Note.*

As a consequence of the unrest in Samoa in December, 1888, Prince Bismarck proposed in February, 1889, that a Conference between England, America and Germany should be held in Berlin. This commenced on April 29th in Berlin, its President being Count Herbert Bismarck, the Foreign Minister. Count Herbert had previously arrived at an agreement with Lord Salisbury on the question in March, 1889, on the occasion of his mission to England. The result of the Conference was the famous Samoa Act of June 14th, 1889.

## IV. 406

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, LONDON, TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*March 27th, 1889*

In accordance with your telegram of yesterday, I communicated to Lord Salisbury your assent to our agreement regarding Samoa and arranged also with him that after my departure a confidential instruction, designed for reading aloud, in accordance with my Report of March 22nd, should be forwarded to Hatzfeldt. Nothing was to be handed to Salisbury in writing, as he wished to keep the affair out of the Records.

I spoke in like terms to Goschen by Lord Salisbury's desire; he approves of our scheme and is to meet me again to-morrow.

Berchem writes to me that you changed your mind and appointed him, instead of Holstein, as Vice-Chairman of the Conference. In this case, it will be best to keep Holstein out of it altogether. He was only considered, because he speaks English so well and knows from experience how to deal with the Yankees. He would not be much use on the business side, as he knows nothing of Colonial matters; moreover, four German Plenipotentiaries seem excessive, considering the smallness of the object of the Conference.

Berchem's ignorance of English makes him little suited to the office of Chairman and we do not wish for a bi-lingual Protocol. However, as we do not meet until Easter I shall be able to discuss the matter with you, before the appointments are submitted to His Majesty. (BISMARCK: 'Yes.')

Judging from my conversations so far with Ministers and people of influence, there is a consistently genuine and growing desire, even greater than formerly, not only to keep on the best terms with us, but also to lay all possible emphasis on the community of our interests everywhere. Equally consistently I met with the anxiety lest East African affairs might take a turn, likely to excite public opinion here and threaten the existence of the Government. The other questions, some of them far more important, were made less of, but I was obliged to discuss Zanzibar in detail with Chamberlain, Goschen, Rosebery and Lord Salisbury's two Under-Secretaries of State, each for a good hour. I was



able to reassure them for the moment, by repeating that we should always maintain our harmony with England in dealing with Zanzibar. I was told that the Missionary question would occasion more 'uneasiness' here than any other, and also the fact that, since the German seizure of territory, trade and communications (owing to the fighting) had suffered substantially; that, before the Germans came, British subjects had done good business without disturbance, (BISMARCK: '*Germans also.*') and that now many of them are ruined, with no immediate prospect of improvement. (BISMARCK: '*As on the Nile.*') To this was added the wish that the bombarding of the Ports should cease. I will not mention here the details of my answers. They were based exclusively on facts and were received in the friendly spirit, which has been maintained throughout the conversations.

Taking the foregoing into consideration, it is all the more to Lord Salisbury's credit, that he stood by us so firmly. The whole Foreign Office, as well as his colleagues, have urged him strongly against it, for fear of its effect on the Parliamentary majority, and Lord Salisbury has had great trouble in sticking to his point.

Chamberlain, whose influence with the electors appears to be increasing again, received me yesterday and has invited me for to-morrow. His friendship for Germany has never come out so strongly as in our interview yesterday. He actually said, 'since *Germania nulla salus*,' and declared that both parties must make every effort to 'remove all points from which difficulties might arise between the two countries in the future.'<sup>1</sup> Leaving Zanzibar, he turned to South-West Africa, sharply criticised Granville's policy in 1884, and continued: 'You have troubles there now, and I know the whole Namaqua and Damara territories are not worth a rap for Germany, so that you would do best to give up that so-called German Colony whose sole harbour (Walfisch Bay) belongs to England. For us that part of South-West Africa would be of great value to keep the Cape in order, which is one of our most important Colonies. The Cape people are very troublesome of late; they think of levying taxes and of making difficult for us the access of Bechuanaland. Now if we could build a railway from Walfisch Bay right through the territory which is at present under the German sway, we should have a direct road to Bechuanaland (BISMARCK: '*Is it worth a railway?*') and could bring very strong pressure to bear upon the Cape people. So you see that we have an interest in stepping into your shoes there, which I am sure will prove too tight for you.'

I replied that we expected no great profits out of Angra Pequena, that the present fighting was distasteful to us, and that,

<sup>1</sup> English in the text.

with reference to the 'troublesome Cape-man, Lewis,' we should let the matter rest for 20 and even 30 years. But we could not give it up, if only for the sake of prestige because Angra Pequena had been the 'starting-point of our Colonial enterprises'.

'Naturally,' replied Chamberlain, 'we cannot suggest your making a present of that Colony to England, however worthless it may be.—There must be compensation. What do you think if we gave you Heligoland instead, which is useless for England and perhaps worth having for you, were it but for the prestige?'<sup>1</sup>

The same thought had occurred to me, but I wished my companion to suggest it first. I concealed the satisfaction that his words caused me, and merely said that it was a pity that he, Chamberlain, was not at present a Minister, so that we might take his suggestion *ad referendum* and clear the road for business. Chamberlain answered: 'That exchange would be popular in England and would find an assured majority in Parliament. I shall defend it myself through thick and thin in the House.'<sup>2</sup> The matter is to be recommended for the very reason that we must abolish all possible sources of dispute between us. In the event of a fresh Franco-German war, you would be greatly embittered, if French war-ships lay off Heligoland and coaled there, and it is in the power of "Lewis or a similar beggar" to make trouble for us in Africa also.'

I urged Chamberlain to lay the subject before his Party chief, Lord Hartington, to be passed on to Lord Salisbury. He was ready to do this and added: 'Talk direct to Hartington and Salisbury and tell them both that I requested you to do so.'

I consider that the affair would be advantageous to us and be immensely popular in Germany. Our South-West African Company is incompetent, bankrupt and lifeless. We are in real difficulties with our Commissioner, who has had to take refuge in the English Walfisch Bay, and now we have not a soul in the whole of that Colonial territory who belongs to the Empire. Many would like to give up Angra Pequena altogether; whereas, in the eyes of His Majesty and of our Navy, Heligoland is invaluable for us in the North Sea in the event of war.

My first thought was to follow Chamberlain's suggestion and talk the matter over with Lord Salisbury, so as to give shape to it at once. I am to see him on Friday, the day after to-morrow, at 3 p.m.

After further consideration I have decided in the first place to speak to Hartington only.\* Though he is not in the Government, he is the most influential man in England at present. It may show too much empressment to approach Lord Salisbury at once. (BISMARCK: 'Yes.')

<sup>1</sup> The final sentences in English.

<sup>2</sup> English in the text.

If Hartington takes up the matter and brings it before Salisbury, we can deal with the subject at our convenience, so as to complete it finally at the time of the Emperor's visit.

His Majesty would be delighted at it, and I should consider it a handsome success.

If you are of opinion that I should speak to Lord Salisbury at once, please telegraph as early as possible on Friday, 'Yes, go on'. I might be able to see Lord Salisbury again on Saturday. I hope to start for home on Saturday evening.

It seems to me that the matter might be left to ripen a little longer. On the other hand, in view of the Conference, a friendly arrangement of this kind with the English might be useful against the Yankees. I do not suppose that Salisbury will be impressed (*verprellt*), if I am the first to mention the subject. Whether to press the matter or not, is an affair of political feeling, and I defer entirely to yours.

H. BISMARCK.

*Postscript.*

Mr. Gorst, a Member of Parliament and of the Government, has for a year and a half spoken in Parliament in favour of unconditional retirement from Heligoland, and his Party will now be for it.

IV. 410

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO PRINCE BISMARCK,  
*March 28th, 1889*

Referring to my letter of March 27.—Count Hatzfeldt considers that it may be best for him to mention Chamberlain's suggestion to Lord Salisbury in conversation next week, when an opportunity will present itself naturally for discussing my visit.

PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK,  
*March 29th, 1889*

I should not recommend your taking the initiative with either the Minister or Hartington. But if you see Chamberlain again, I should be even more forthcoming to him than before, without saying anything definite. The matter will not be ripe till the summer. I agree with your telegram of March 28th.

IV. 410

COUNT HATZFELDT TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *April 13th, 1889*

*Secret.*

During several private conversations with Lord Salisbury, I have been able to refer to the latest visit of the Foreign Secretary, Count Bismarck, and have ascertained that his conversations

have made a thoroughly satisfactory impression on Lord Salisbury. The latter received several remarks, that I made regarding the interviews that Count Bismarck had held here with other statesmen, in a forthcoming spirit, but he did not betray whether Mr. Chamberlain had forewarned him of any special proposal. I did not therefore think it advisable to make any strong or premature overture in the matter, but rather to wait in the interests of the case for a suitable occasion, so as not to lay too much stress on it.

In my last confidential conversation with the Minister, we mentioned Mr. Chamberlain, his attitude towards the Government and his political and personal aims, and I was able to lead in a natural manner on to the interview that he had had with our Foreign Minister.

On my asking whether he had been informed of Mr. Chamberlain's language on that occasion, Lord Salisbury replied with evident truthfulness that he had heard vaguely about it, but could not remember having been told that any specially interesting subjects had been discussed.

I threw in the remark that Mr. Chamberlain seemed to interest himself specially in South Africa, but that I knew nothing of his reasons for this. Lord Salisbury replied at once that that was quite possible. Mr. Chamberlain had explained certain desires of the Cape Colony, which it was in our power to accomplish, and perhaps he contemplated some compensation in exchange for them. As I did not deny this, Lord Salisbury asked if Mr. Chamberlain had mentioned Heligoland.

I answered that he was right in his surmise, but that Count Bismarck, as he would not have failed to notice, had not said a word to him about Mr. Chamberlain's suggestion. In any case, the matter was not as simple as Mr. Chamberlain perhaps assumed, for many German private interests were involved in those South African territories, which were reputed to contain gold mines, etc., of whose value very little indeed was known. On the other hand, Count Bismarck wished to avoid mentioning the matter, and so obliging the Minister to express an opinion on a subject which might be distasteful to him.

My position is so far different, since, now that some time has passed by, I can tell him of the occurrence in confidence, without his supposing that I am commissioned to do so, which is indeed not at all the case. I told him, further, that I should be interested to learn as well how Mr. Chamberlain hit upon his astonishing proposition. The question of Heligoland was in itself no new one.<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury knew this and also that on our side no word had been uttered about it for years. For my part, I could

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 170, 175.

say to him with the frankness I have always shown to him, that personally I had not yet formed any definite opinion whether the possession of Heligoland would be a great and positive advantage to Germany. The only point on which I was clear was a negative political advantage, which, however, must not be undervalued. The Minister knew, no one better, that my whole strength is directed towards making the political relations between England and Germany ever closer and removing everything likely to disturb them. I could imagine the possibility, in the event of a Franco-German war, in which England was taking no part, of French war-ships running to Heligoland for safety, and I could not doubt that such an eventuality might exercise an incalculable influence on our relations with England, which would be almost impossible to make good again.

The Minister broke in with the emphatic remark: 'That at any rate will never happen.' He then developed the theory that our retirement from South Africa would benefit England nominally, but only Cape Colony in fact. He added confidentially with a smile that he personally had no great enthusiasm for the suggestion of granting territorial advantages to Colonies which were more or less independent, for England would receive but little gratitude for it. On the other hand, he was quite unable to see what real advantage Heligoland would offer us. Germany would be forced to lay out large sums of money to make anything of the island, and he believed its existence was not assured for ever, as it was badly undermined by the sea.

At the close of our long confidential conversation, which Lord Salisbury had to break off owing to other engagements, he said: 'Si vous voulez, nous en reparlerons une autre fois.'

My impression is that the Minister's attitude is not to be taken as a definite rejection of Mr. Chamberlain's suggestion, although he may not greet it with enthusiasm, and that it is to our interest to leave him plenty of time for examination and discussion of the question with his closest political friends. I also think it advisable in order to avoid the impression that we set great store on possessing the island. Therefore, if Your Highness does not instruct me differently, I would wait a few weeks at least before returning to the question with the Minister, and then only when a suitable opportunity offers. (BISMARCK: 'Wait.')

#### IV. 413

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, AT KÖNIGSTEIN, TO  
COUNT VON BERCHEM, *June 21st, 1889*

Our secret records contain a report from Count Hatzfeldt, several weeks old (April 13th), on the subject of Heligoland, according to which Lord Salisbury approached the question of

exchange in a friendly but evasive manner, reserving the right of eventually reopening it himself. Knowing English conditions, as I do, I think it would not suit our object to reopen it now from our side, and would certainly not advise it, without asking Count Hatzfeldt beforehand. If we show excessive eagerness, we shall raise the price and perhaps destroy the bargain altogether.

It would be impossible to sign at Osborne (when the Emperor is paying his visit), for the assent of both Houses of Parliament, probably after several Readings, would be required first.

Please obtain from the Central Bureau my letter on Heligoland of March 27th, which is deposited in the secret Records, inform him of His Majesty's wishes, and request His Highness's authority to obtain a confidential report from Count Hatzfeldt as to the best method of bringing the matter forward again?

Strict secrecy is required.

#### IV. 413-4

COUNT VON BERCHEM TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 21st, 1889*

*Secret.*

His Majesty commands me to report to Your Highness on the subject of exchanging Heligoland for German South-West Africa, which Mr. Chamberlain suggested to Count Herbert Bismarck in March of this year. His Majesty believes Chamberlain's offer to be a firm one and assumes that the latter will have meanwhile obtained the support of other Members of Parliament for it. He does not doubt that Chamberlain has influenced Lord Salisbury in its favour. It may be well to reopen the question, since Queen Victoria is just now showing much friendliness to our Gracious Master in offering to appoint him an Admiral. Also the intended presence of both Houses of Parliament at the British Naval Review, on August 3rd, indicates Lord Salisbury's pro-German influence and also his power. His Majesty considers Heligoland militarily to be of the greatest importance to us. In the case of a war the first action of the French would be to secure and provision it. If Germany possessed it, it would be easy to defend the Elbe and the Jade Bay.

His Majesty declared that we should take advantage of the current of favour in England, which is just now setting in our direction, in order to reopen and conclude the matter, so that the Agreement may certainly be signed at Osborne. The Emperor has commissioned me to instruct Your Highness in this sense and to ask if any progress has been made and whether the business can be hurried up.

He adds that he would have written to Your Highness in his

own hand, if he had not feared causing you to reply by the same means, and so fatiguing yourself.

As Count Hatzfeldt's despatch of April 13th shows (here enclosed), Lord Salisbury's attitude towards the exchange of territory in question was friendly, but somewhat evasive; which caused Your Highness to recommend a policy of waiting.

Is Count Hatzfeldt to be instructed to report confidentially on the wisdom of reopening the matter and the tactics to be followed in doing so?

In the event of Your Highness's desire for His Majesty's agreement with your views, before His Majesty's journey to South Germany on June 24th, I would respectfully request telegraphic instructions.

#### IV. 415

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK, AT KÖNIGSTEIN, TO  
COUNT VON BERCHEM, *June 21st, 1889*

*Secret.*

In connexion with my to-day's telegram and the private letter of March 27th,<sup>1</sup> which is referred to in it and describes the genesis of the question of the Heligoland exchange, I wish to remark that, on perusing Count Hatzfeldt's single despatch, which arrived in April and is deposited in the secret records, His Majesty decided on a policy of waiting. As Lord Salisbury said to Count Hatzfeldt, without much show of enthusiasm, that the matter might perhaps be referred to again in a few weeks' time, the Chancellor recommended not to urge it, in order to avoid difficulty in fulfilling His Majesty's desires by a demonstration of too much eagerness.

Mr. Chamberlain, with whom I only once discussed the affair, informed Lord Hartington of his idea during my last visit to London. The latter mentioned it to me casually, without however stating his own opinion on the matter at the time. . . . A difficulty lies in the fact that the Count has hardly any acquaintance with Mr. Chamberlain, and, as I know, never discusses politics with Lord Hartington, as the latter is reserved with foreigners and also speaks French unwillingly and badly. The relations between Lord Salisbury and Count Hatzfeldt are admirable and very intimate, but always based on the official quality of each. In business matters there are not private considerations between Ambassador and Prime Minister. (BISMARCK: '*True.*') Thus considered, a fresh attack by the Ambassador might cause Lord Salisbury to feel that he is being pushed against the wall, and therefore obliged to return a negative

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 375.

answer. (BISMARCK: '*True. I do not think that considering all things we ought to take the initiative. It would jeopardise the matter and weaken impressions, even our present good relations towards the Queen. We should appear greedy.*') )

It should not be forgotten that the Cape Colony's lawlessness and hankering after independence has made it rather unpopular not only with the Central Government, but also with a section of the English public, in these last years, and that there will be no great inclination to aggrandise the Colony and give up Heligoland for its sake. I cannot judge whether it would be possible for the British Government to take over our South-West Africa, or not.

A Conservative Government will find more difficulty in carrying through transactions of this kind than a Liberal Government, for the Liberals under Gladstone's dishonest leadership will make Party capital out of anything in order to damage Lord Salisbury. Chamberlain foresaw a struggle in Parliament (BISMARCK: '*Naturally.*'), but said that he meant to support his own plan and finally obtain a majority. But if Lord Salisbury now wishes to avoid a Party conflict on the Heligoland Question for reasons of internal politics, Chamberlain's best intentions will go for nothing. The latter probably has commercial interests behind him, such as those connected with the mines discovered in South-West Africa. But whether these are strong enough to have a deciding influence with Lord Salisbury seems doubtful to me, after this long silence.

Should Count Hatzfeldt now find the ground favourable for reopening the question, it is possible that the effect on parliamentary opinion of the great naval review, at which members will be present, may make it appear that the moment is a favourable (BISMARCK: '*?*') one for proceeding with the matter. (BISMARCK: '*?*' No. *We must wait for British initiative, and for this, the moment when England needs us. At present we need England, if peace is still to be maintained.*') On the other hand, British public opinion and especially the Opposition will easily win the impression, or pretend to, that England is making us too great a concession, on the grounds of the Emperor's visit, if the latter is used for concluding the business.

Owing to the want of a spirit of enterprise in Germany in overseas investments, I do not attach much importance to South-West Africa. Our countrymen prefer buying unsafe foreign State Loans, and refuse to follow the example of the English, who made their vast fortune mostly out of distant undertakings and are not frightened of going forward by costly initial expenses. If we keep South-West Africa, we also shall be obliged to incur greater expenses than formerly for policing, protection



and administration, and it is not meanwhile to be expected that trade and capital will follow our flag.

Only if, after the exchange is completed, Englishmen and Cape Colonials make full use of the mines and cattle farms and obtain good profits, will it be said in Germany that we did wrong in giving up that Colony. On the other hand, I consider that, apart from military considerations, the acquisition of Heligoland will be so popular with us, that, in view of the national defects of our Colonial policy, to which I have referred, the exchange might prove acceptable.

#### IV. 417

PRINCE BISMARCK TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*June 23rd, 1889*

*Secret.*

The Report of June 21st received.

I consider the Foreign Secretary's reasoned statement entirely to the point, and that any initiative by Germany whatsoever would be bad, even the enquiry of Count Hatzfeldt, as it would lead him into discussion with Lord Salisbury. If we take the initiative, it would not only bring difficulties into the Heligoland business, but would provide the Opposition in England with an excuse to describe the whole visit as a move intended to do harm to England. After what has happened, I consider that we must wait for England to take the initiative. The silence of Lord Salisbury, Lord Hartington and Chamberlain shows that any initiative taken by Germany now would almost certainly fail. This failure, i.e., the contempt for German greediness and the British refusal, would almost neutralise the great political effect, for which I am hoping, of the Emperor's visit. I advise strongly against it in the interests of future success.

#### IV. 418

COUNT VON BERCHEM TO PRINCE BISMARCK, *June 24th, 1889*

Reply to secret telegram of June 23rd.

His Majesty agrees with Your Highness's opinion and is satisfied that the matter should be allowed to rest for the present.

#### IV. 418

COUNT HERBERT BISMARCK TO VON RADOWITZ, AMBASSADOR  
IN CONSTANTINOPLE, *August 18th, 1889*

*Very confidential.*

For your confidential and strictly personal information concerning the latest political events, I would remark that the meetings between His Majesty the Emperor and the Queen of England (Osborne, August 1st-7th) and the Emperor Francis

Joseph (Berlin, August 12th-16th) have been satisfactory in every respect. Even before the Emperor's visit to Osborne, our official relations towards the British Government were the best possible, as Your Excellency knows. The great impression, which His Majesty's presence and personality made upon the Queen as well as on the multitude that looked on, have genuinely contributed to make the intimacy of our relations towards England generally apparent to all Europe, as well as to British public opinion through the Press. A further advantage has been gained by the fact that His Majesty came in direct touch not only with the heads of the British Army and Navy, but also with all ranks as well.

It was not necessary to discuss new and unprepared themes in my detailed conversations with Lord Salisbury, thanks to the constant personal discussions which I have enjoyed with the British Prime Minister in late years. My conviction has been strengthened by my last exchange of opinions with Lord Salisbury and other British statesmen, that the present Government is more firmly established than it has been for some time past, and possesses the power of making England's position as a Great Power more prominent than it has been for years past to the disadvantage of our political constellations.

#### VI. 356

##### *German Note.*

On June 26th, 1889, Count Hatzfeldt reported a detailed conversation with Lord Salisbury in which the latter was preoccupied by the notion of a Russo-Austrian understanding à la Reichstadt on Eastern Affairs and was inclined to a policy of caution and reserve. He wished, before departing from this attitude of reserve, at least to wait for the result of the coming French Elections and their reaction on the Republic's Eastern policy.

#### VI. 356

##### PRINCE BISMARCK TO COUNT HATZFELDT, *June 30th, 1889*

I am not surprised at Lord Salisbury's anxiety regarding the possibility of a Russo-Austrian understanding, because on one side he is not so well acquainted with the sentiment of the Austro-Hungarian population as we are, and also the proceedings of the secret Convention of Reichstadt, in which Austria promised neutrality in return for the occupation of Bosnia, form a precedent, which may well be in Lord Salisbury's mind. I do not think it probable that these proceedings will be repeated in Vienna. The inclination to place Austria in complete dependence on Russia is quite absent in most parts of Austria, and exists only to a very small extent in some Slavonic districts. Austria can only pursue an independent policy in alliance with

Germany or England, and never if allied with Russia. An insincere separate agreement with Russia would be bound to ruin Austria and would give rise to the fear that Germany might be in a position to offer much greater advantages to Russia than Austria could. All our differences with Russia rest not on difficulties between the two countries, but solely on the fact that we are ready to protect Austria against Russian aggression, because Austria's continued existence as a strong and independent Great Power is essential to the balance of power in Europe. Hence our refusal to leave Austria in the lurch against Russian attacks remains the sole reason for Russo-German differences. If these came to an end through Austria's junction with Russia, we should find it much easier than Austria to come to an agreement with Russia. . . .

The reactionary politicians of the Hapsburg Monarchy are without exception Catholic and more or less fanatical. They fear the domination of the Greek Church far more than a struggle with Protestantism, for the Greek Church has the might of Russia behind it, as the instance of the Uniates shows. True sympathy for Russia exists only amongst a few Czech agitators in Russian pay, and they are without influence on the rest.

I therefore consider Lord Salisbury's fears of a possible Russo-Austrian understanding to be unfounded, and only suppose them to be a move on his part, by which he hopes to avoid being obliged to admit that England will be unprepared in a military sense for a long time to come to take active part in European affairs, or that the hope that the Balkan struggle may yet be fought out without active participation by England, has not yet been given up. . . .

You may perhaps find an opportunity for sounding Lord Salisbury as to whether he believes in the possibility of renewing the British Alliance with France in an anti-Russian sense. For a long time to come, I should regard this belief to be erroneous. Even thirty-six years ago the Anglo-French Alliance was only possible under the unusual combination of circumstances in which a French Emperor, having been irritated by Russia, tried to win a place in the world of Monarchs with the help of a friendly Queen Victoria. Such a combination does not repeat itself, and its effects were very short-lived and did little good to England. France will gravitate to the side of Russia even more decidedly than Austria would. . . . The attitude of England and Palmerston at the time of Radetski and Haynau drove Austria into the arms of Russia, and only a repetition of their ill-treatment at the hands of Gladstone's Cabinet and of England's old friends in Vienna and Constantinople ('Hands off'—'Unspeakable Turk') can induce Austrian Statesmen to seek the support of their Russian rivals. But so long as the Gladstone spirit no longer rules in England, I do not believe in an Austrian rapprochement to Russia.

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- LABOUCHERE, H., Radical Member of Parliament. Editor of *Truth*.  
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RUSTEM PACHA, Turkish Ambassador in London, 1885-95.

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STANLEY, H. M., African Explorer and Member of Parliament.

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WOLFF, Sir H. Drummond, Envoy Extraordinary to the Sultan and High  
Commissioner in Egypt, 1885-7.

WOLSELEY, Sir Garnet (Viscount), Commanding in Egypt, 1882.





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